



# Corporate Report

Clerk's Files CA.22

Originator's  
Files

---

**DATE:** January 5, 2011

**TO:** Mayor and Members of Council  
Meeting Date: January 19, 2011

**FROM:** Brenda R. Breault, CMA, MBA  
Commissioner of Corporate Services and Treasurer

**SUBJECT:** **Accessible Municipal Elections**

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the report dated January 5, 2011, from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Treasurer, entitled Accessible Municipal Elections, be received for information.

**BACKGROUND:** The City Clerk is responsible for the administration of Municipal Elections in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*. In 2009, among other amendments including a change to voting day, the following provisions were added to the legislation:

*12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.*

*12.1 (2) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall submit a report to council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.*

**COMMENTS:** As part of the planning and implementation of the 2010 Municipal Elections, the Election team reviewed all election processes and practices to identify barriers to accessibility. As a result of the identification of the barriers, a number of actions were undertaken to

either remove or prevent the barriers, in the context of the following areas: Communications and Information; Voting locations; Voting Process; Staff Training and Voting Methods (ie. Vote tabulators). In addition to the identification of barriers, areas for consideration for the 2014 Municipal Election have also been identified.

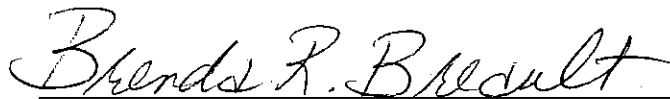
One of the most significant measures undertaken to accommodate voters was the availability of the Automark accessible voting equipment at all advance voting locations on all advance voting days.

The complete Election Accessibility Report prepared to comply with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* is attached as Appendix 1.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** The majority of measures taken to accommodate voters had minimal cost given that when integrated into the election planning, accessibility options could be incorporated into the overall election project. The exception was the cost of renting the Automark accessible voting equipment used at the Advance Voting locations which was \$30,500.

**CONCLUSION:** In accordance with Section 12.1 (2) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, this report has been prepared to outline the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The actions noted in the report will be used in the planning for the 2014 Municipal Elections.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Appendix 1: Election Accessibility Report



---

Brenda R. Breault, CMA, MBA  
Commissioner of Corporate Services and Treasurer

*Prepared By: Laura Wilson, Election Assistant*

City of Mississauga Election Accessibility Report

Identification of Barriers

We took the following actions to identify barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities:

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Considerations for 2014 Election</i>
<p>1. Assessed past election administration practices, identifying the likelihood of our practice creating a risk to accessibility of candidates and electors and then identified the impact of the risk and developed measures to mitigate or minimize the risk.</p> <p>Discussed the needs of persons with disabilities insofar as they relate to municipal elections and made accommodations based on these needs</p>	<p>-Practice to be repeated in 2014</p> <p>-Transportation to and from the polls</p>
<p>2. Met with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to review initiatives and consider additional options based on the Committee's feedback</p> <p>Updated the Accessibility Staff Working Group regarding steps taken to ensure the Election was administered in accordance with applicable legislation</p>	<p>-Practice to be repeated in 2014</p>
<p>3. Gathered comments and recommendations from the municipality's Accessibility Coordinator on methods to meet accessibility needs</p>	<p>-Conduct a review of reasonable accessibility standards in regards to hiring</p> <p>-Continue making reasonable efforts to meet accessibility needs</p> <p>-Gather more research on who might access accessibility programs</p>
<p>4. Created an accessibility checklist with input from the Accessibility Coordinator, for election personnel to use when conducting site visits of each voting location</p>	<p>-Expanding checklist to exceed current standards, including assessing the distance from parking and doorways to the voting locations within a facility; identifying locations with working accessibility mechanisms for door openers.</p>
<p>5. Assessed accessible voting equipment options to meet the needs of the electorate</p>	<p>-Investigate accessible equipment options which would streamline the voting process so that the process is less time consuming</p>

Removal and Prevention of Barriers

*We took the following actions to remove and prevent barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities:*

*Communications and Information*

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Considerations for 2014 Election</i>
<p>1. Ensured communication initiatives and information for candidates and electors were available in alternate formats, and that Election information was available through TTY phone service and 3-1-1.</p>	<p>-As in 2010, ensure that all information is universally accessible through the use of appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fonts</li> <li>• text sizing</li> <li>• colours</li> <li>• spacing</li> <li>• lighting</li> </ul> <p>-Continue to make information available in a variety of formats upon request</p>
<p>2. Posted all information to municipality's website</p>	<p>-As per the AAC working group's suggestion, investigate the possibility of online voting as a way to support persons with disabilities</p>
<p>3. Had the ability to provide all documentation and forms in large print upon request, to aid those with low vision.</p>	<p>- Practice to be repeated in 2014                      -Acquire magnifiers to assist at all polling locations.                      -Using Fill and Print Form formats.</p>
<p>4. Enlisted assistance of the Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB). The CNIB sent out correspondences regarding the Election to their members on behalf of the Elections Team</p>	<p>-Collaborate with other institutions such as the Canadian Hearing Society and Community Living</p>
<p>5. Provided candidates and staff with information relating to accessible customer service</p>	<p>-Continue directing candidates to organizations and information to encourage open dialogue regarding persons with disabilities and ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to campaigns</p>
<p>6. Provided information to candidates regarding Campaign Expenses and particular rules affecting disabled candidates</p>	<p>- Practice to be repeated in 2014</p>

*Voting Locations*

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Considerations for 2014 Election</i>
<p>1. Conducted site visits of all potential voting locations to ensure full accessibility. In the event that City standards were not met we took the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hired hall monitors who could open doors and direct Electors directly to the voting place</li> <li>• Ensured that ramps could be installed</li> <li>• Made provisions for an increased number of accessible parking spots</li> </ul>	<p>-Increase our expectations/ standards regarding the physical accessibility of voting locations                      -Stay abreast of any legislative changes regarding the building code to ensure that locations used in 2014 meet standards</p>
<p>2. Developed a template for voting location set-up to determine maximum accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensured that Advance Poll and Election Day set ups allowed Electors to easily maneuver through the polling location</li> <li>• Take into account specific needs of Election workers who might have difficulty sitting or standing for long periods of time etc.</li> <li>• Ran trial of Recount Day set up to ensure that all persons could easily maneuver around the furniture</li> </ul>	<p>- Practice to be repeated in 2014</p>
<p>3. Provided voting locations on advance voting days with accessible voting equipment                      Provided an operator at each advance poll location to operate the chosen accessible voting equipment</p>	<p>-Investigate providing accessible voting equipment throughout the City on Election Day</p>
<p>4. Addressed accessibility concerns with the School Boards and ensured that steps could be taken to avoid barriers such as erecting temporary ramps providing staff to open manual doors etc.</p>	<p>- Practice to be repeated in 2014</p>
<p>5. Provided appropriate signage at voting locations so that information was clearly visible to those with low vision</p>	<p>- Practice to be repeated in 2014</p>
<p>6. Set up a process to facilitate notification of any last minute disruptions in service or voting location changes, should an emergency occur including posting signage and having hall monitors relay information to Electors upon entry to the</p>	<p>- Practice to be repeated in 2014</p>

	voting place	
7.	Ensured designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location and made provisions to provide additional accessible parking if necessary	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
8.	For the recount held at City Hall, the Election team ensured that there was a ramp leading down into the recount area to ensure that if necessary workers, candidates or scrutineers requiring ramp access were accommodated. And damaged ballots requiring duplication were also displayed on a large LCD screen so that persons with low vision had the ability to see the duplication.	-Practice to be repeated in 2014

*Voting Process – see also additional table at the end of this table Re. accessible voting methods made available*

	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Considerations for 2014 Election</i>
1.	Ensured that workers were equipped to provide service to persons who required assistance on Election Day. Workers were trained to provided bed side voting at institutions and retirement homes.	-Investigate providing accessible voting machines at each location on Election Day -Investigate provision of online voting for persons who have difficulty going to voting locations -Investigate provision of curb-side voting to accommodate electors with mobility issues.
2.	Provided instructions on use of accessible voting equipment and made an AutoMark operator available to assist persons with disabilities.	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
3.	Scheduled extended advance voting opportunities where an AutoMark was available for persons with disabilities.	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
4.	Promoted advance voting opportunity for electors with disabilities	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
5.	Provided voting opportunities on the premises of a) an institution in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed; b) a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied	- Practice to be repeated in 2014 -Update inventory of institutions and retirement homes.
6.	Added tools to assist with ensuring accessibility such as sharpies that are easily gripped for filling in ballots.	- Practice to be repeated in 2014

*Staff Training*

<i>Actions</i>		<i>Considerations for 2014 Election</i>
1.	Staff training incorporated provisions to meet accessible customer service standards	-Include a comprehensive online training program
2.	Provided reference materials such as the City of Mississauga's "May I Help You? Understanding Accessible Customer Service"	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
3.	Monitored elector's concerns and ensured that their needs were met, i.e. if an individual with a walker was in a long line, a chair was offered and the Elector's place in line was maintained	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
4.	Directed election staff to observe electors during discussions with them, and if it appeared that the voter was having difficulty understanding, ensured that the voter was able to clearly see the speaker.	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
5.	Encouraged election workers to approach an elector if it appeared that the elector required assistance maneuvering through the voting location. Offered assistance to help, did not assume an individual needed help	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
6.	Permitted support persons in all voting locations and trained staff on appropriate procedures to allow a support person to help a person with a disability complete their ballot.	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
7.	Maintained a friendly and approachable demeanour, regardless of how tired, upset or hassled a worker may have felt	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
8.	Checked the access doors frequently to offer assistance and watch for electors unable to easily enter the building	- Practice to be repeated in 2014
9.	Evaluated effectiveness of training post-election.	- Practice to be repeated in 2014

*Voting Methods*

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Considerations for 2014 Election</i>
<p>Traditional Paper Ballot, markers were provided that were easy to grip</p> <p>Reviewed accessibility voting equipment with Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and received approval</p> <p>-Considered recommendations made by the AAC and the Accessibility Staff Working Group regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Voting</li> <li>• Accessible voting equipment being available City wide on Election Day for future elections</li> </ul>	<p>-Practice to be repeated in 2014</p> <p>-Magnifiers to be provided at each voting location</p> <p>-Appropriate equipment to be investigated for use in 2014.</p> <p>-Investigate online voting</p> <p>-Investigate using a more streamlined accessible voting system</p> <p>-Making accessible voting machines available on all Advance Voting Days as well as Election Day</p>
<p>Audio ballots available using the Automark</p>	<p>-Appropriate equipment to be investigated for use in 2014.</p>
<p>Other Assistive Devices (sip and puff, paddles, etc.) used in conjunction with the Automark</p>	<p>-Appropriate equipment to be investigated for use in 2014.</p>