



City of Kingston
Information Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
Report Number MAAC-22-006

To: Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Resource Staff: John Bolognone, City Clerk

Date of Meeting: June 2, 2022

Subject: 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Regulatory & compliance

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

This report provides an overview of accessibility considerations for the 2022 municipal election. As required by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the clerk shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and shall prepare a plan for the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before voting day.

This report provides an overview of accessibility considerations to be implemented or considered for the 2022 municipal election with regards to communications and candidate information, voting places, accessible voting equipment, internet voting, other voting options, transportation and staff training. Committee members are asked to provide their feedback on the information provided and general accessibility considerations for the election. Following Committee review of this report, staff will complete the 2022 municipal election accessibility plan and make it publicly available via the [City of Kingston election website](#).

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

June 2, 2022

Page 2 of 7

Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Neil Carbone, Commissioner,
Corporate Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

June 2, 2022

Page 3 of 7

Options/Discussion:

Legislative background

Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the Act) provides that a clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. Additionally, the clerk shall prepare a plan for the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before voting day.

The Act also requires that within 90 days after the 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.

Staff are seeking comments and feedback on election accessibility and current plans organized in the following sub-sections to this report. Information received through this report will be incorporated into the election accessibility plan, to be made public on the [City of Kingston election website](#).

Communications & Candidate Information

Staff are committed to ensuring that all communications and information available for both candidates and electors is accessible. The City's election website will be the main resource for information for both candidates and electors. The website is WCAG 2.0 AA compliant, and all PDF documents required by candidates will be remediated for use by screen readers before posting to the website. All documents will also be available in alternate formats upon request.

Additionally, staff are considering the use of DataFix's [Candidate Access Portal](#). The portal provides a self-serve, single-access point for all forms and documents required for candidates in the 2022 municipal election, including updated portions of the voters' list that candidates are entitled to view.

For candidates, staff held two electronic candidate information sessions via Zoom in early April where attendees received information about the requirements to run for Mayor, District Councillor or school board trustee. Representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the City of Kingston, three of the Kingston areas four school boards and a former Council member provided presentations to attendees, which were followed by a Q&A session. A recording of one of the sessions was made available for viewing on the [City of Kingston YouTube channel](#). 35 members of the public attended the sessions.

In March 2022 staff released a podcast via the [City of Kingston: Tell Me More](#) platform. The podcast provides listeners with information on how to run for Council, job duties, and what characteristics make a good City Councillor. An additional episode will be released in Summer 2022 focusing on the importance of voting and the options available to residents to cast their

June 2, 2022

Page 4 of 7

ballot. Staff are continuing to examine new and interactive methods for sharing information related to the election with potential candidates and electors.

Voting Places

Like 2018, a MAAC project team will be appointed with members conducting site visits to potential voting places alongside City staff. During the site visits project team members will audit the facilities for accessibility from both an elector and election worker point of view. The audit checklist will be based on criteria from previous municipal elections as well as the Government of Canada's election accessibility criteria for federal elections, attached to this report as Exhibit A.

The 2022 election will have five days of in-person Advanced Voting, taking place from Tuesday October 18 to Saturday October 22. In 2018 one day of in-person Advanced Voting was provided. Hours of operation for the voting places will be staggered, with voting places open two days from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., one day from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. and two days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Six in-person Advanced Voting places will be provided, spread throughout Kingston and located on bus routes or within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop. For the in-person Advanced Voting period, electors will be able to cast their ballot at any voting place in Kingston, regardless of the district in which they reside.

The proposed locations for Advanced Voting are:

- Rideau Heights Community Centre (85 MacCauley Street);
- Kingston East Community Centre (779 Highway 15);
- INVISTA Centre (1350 Gardiners Road);
- Portsmouth Olympic Harbour (53 Yonge Street);
- Central Library Branch (130 Johnson Street); and
- Isabel Turner Library Branch (935 Gardiners Road).

On Voting Day (Monday October 24), 13 in-person voting places will be provided. There will be one voting place provided per district, with two voting places provided in Countryside District. Like in-person Advanced Voting places, in-person Voting Day places will be located on bus routes or within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop. For in-person Voting Day, electors will be required to cast their ballot at the specific voting place in their home district. Final locations of voting places have not been determined, however, Voting Day is scheduled to be a PA Day and staff will examine the potential for hosting voting places in schools.

The physical lay out of all in-person voting places will be set up to allow for appropriate physical distancing between electors and election workers, including the use of physical barriers, signage indicating traffic flows, and where possible, single-way entrance and exits. Hand sanitizer will be available to both electors and election staff. Signage will be placed at the entrance to all locations for those entering to conduct passive screening for symptoms of COVID-19. As part of

June 2, 2022

Page 5 of 7

the election staff at each in-person voting place, a COVID-19 protocol officer will be present to ensure all protocols are being followed and to sanitize high touch areas. Election staff have and will continue to consult with KFL&A Public Health officials on the layout of in-person voting places.

In-person voting places will have individual lighting sources (i.e. desk lamps) and magnifiers available in each voting compartment to assist electors in marking their ballots. Chairs will be made available to those electors who may need to sit while completing paperwork or waiting in line.

Staff are considering having an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter available at an in-person voting place on one of the Advanced Voting Days. As electors will be able to cast a ballot at any in-person Advanced Voting Day place, those who prefer to access the service with the assistance of an ASL interpreter would be able to cast their ballot. The availability of an ASL interpreter and the location of the voting place will be included in promotion for the 2022 municipal election.

As required by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, dedicated voting places will be provided on-site for the residents of long-term care facilities and retirement places. To be eligible for a voting place, a long-term care facility must have 20 or more beds occupied by persons as of September 1; for a retirement place, 50 or more beds must be occupied by September 1. These voting places will operate for a shortened period of time (for example, 10 a.m. to noon or 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.).

Accessible Voting Equipment

Each in-person voting place will have an accessible voting terminal available that will allow an elector to independently mark their ballot in a manner that is in no way distinguishable from other ballots. The equipment provides for a combination of touch screen and/or tactile button (with clear labelling and Braille) navigation through the voting session. An audio interface is also available to allow the elector to independently mark their ballot by navigating and selecting their preferences through audio instructions and touch-screen or push button controls. A voter may also use a rocker paddle or sip-n-puff device to independently mark their ballot. A full description of the accessible voting equipment can be found in the [Optical Scan Voting Procedure](#).

The equipment will be set up to allow for complete privacy of the voting session in a manner similar to a person casting their ballot using pen and paper.

Internet Voting

Internet Voting has been available to Kingston electors since 2014. In 2018 Internet Voting was available for a 10-day period beginning on Advanced Voting Day at 10 a.m. until the close of voting (8 p.m.) on Voting Day.

June 2, 2022

Page 6 of 7

For 2022 internet voting will be available for 20 days, from Wednesday October 5 at 10 a.m. until the close of voting (8 p.m.) on Voting Day, Monday October 24. To vote via the internet, an elector will need to register using information contained on their Voter Information Notice. These notices are mailed to all electors on the voters' list in advance of voting day.

When using internet voting, an elector will need to first register to receive their PIN. Registration will be completed by the elector through entering information on the Voter Identification Notice and their birth date to receive a PIN via email or text message. The elector will then use their PIN to begin their voting session. Registration will be available until 5 p.m. on Voting Day.

The internet voting system is WCAG 2.1 AA compliant and is compatible for use by screen magnifiers or readers and other assistive software.

Other Voting Options

In addition to in-person voting, accessible voting equipment and internet voting, other options are available for electors to cast their ballot:

- Appointing a person to act as a proxy and cast a ballot on behalf of the elector. A person acting as a proxy must complete an authorization form and bring that form to the Elections Office located at City Hall, 216 Ontario Street.
- At in-person voting locations, a person may take an oath of friend, which will allow them to assist an elector in marking their ballot.
- The site supervisor at a voting place may assist a resident in marking their ballot.
- Curbside voting is available for those who may not wish to or be able to enter a voting place but wish to vote in-person. For curbside voting, the site supervisor at a physical voting place brings the proper ballot to elector in their vehicle, where the elector marks their ballot, places it in a secrecy sleeve and returns the ballot to the site supervisor. The site supervisor then returns to the voting place with the ballot and processes it through the vote tabulator.

Transportation

All in-person voting places will be located on a bus route or within 400 metres of a bus stop, except for voting places located in Countryside District.

Kingston Transit will be offering free transit during the hours of operation for in-person voting places on Advanced Voting Days and Voting Day to riders who show their voter identification notice. Kingston Access Bus will be providing free transportation to voting places for registered users going to vote. Users are requested to advise Access Bus staff when booking their trip that they are going to vote in the municipal election.

June 2, 2022

Page 7 of 7

Staff Training

All staff hired to work at voting places will receive training in the provision of accessible customer service as part of their onboarding.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

[Municipal Elections Act, 2016](#)

Notice Provisions:

None

Accessibility Considerations:

Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* provides that a clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. Additionally, the clerk shall prepare a plan for the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before voting day.

Financial Considerations:

None

Contacts:

John Bolognone, City Clerk, 613-546-4291 extension 1247

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Janet Jaynes, Deputy City Clerk, City Clerk's Department

Muhammad Ahsan, Manager, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A – Federal Election Accessibility Criteria

Federal election accessibility criteria

Public transit

1. Public transit stop near the polling place? (Yes/No)

Parking

2. Parking available? (Yes/No)
3. Number of available parking spaces on the property:
4. Parking space(s) for persons with disabilities? (Yes/No)
5. Surface of parking firm and level? (Yes/No)
6. Parking lit? (Yes/No)
7. Pathway from parking lot to the entrance? (Yes/No)

Building exterior

8. Sloping sidewalk (curb cut)? (Yes/No)
9. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Surface of the pathway is firm and obstacle-free? (Yes/No)
10. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Pathway is at least 920 mm (36") wide? (Yes/No)
At the narrowest point the pathway measures (mm):
11. Pathway is free of a long slope? (Yes/No)
12. Pathway is free of a steep incline? (Yes/No)
13. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Building provides a level access to the entrance? (no steps) (Yes/No)
14. Level access ramp is provided? (Yes/No)
15. If there is a level access ramp, it provides:
 - o Handrail? (Yes/No)
 - o Non-slip surface? (Yes/No)

- Clear width of 920 mm (36")? (Yes/No)
 - What is the width of the ramp (mm)?
 - A slope of no more than 4.80°? (Yes/No)
 - Indicate the steepest result: (# of degrees)
16. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Exterior building lighting? (Yes/No)
17. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Building exterior is free of any protruding objects? (Yes/No)
18. There is signage to locate the level access entrance? (Yes/No)

Building entrance

19. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Exterior door has a clear opening width of 810 mm (32")? (Yes/No)
Opening width of this door measures (mm):
20. Door handles are easy to grip? (Yes/No)
21. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Door threshold meets maximum standard of 6 mm (1/4")? (Yes/No)
22. An automatic door opening device is provided (Yes/No)
23. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Weight of the entrance door allows it to be easily opened? (Yes/No)
24. Door gives immediate access to the voting room? (Yes/No)

If yes, go to question 30.

Building interior

25. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Interior door(s) has a clear opening width of 810 mm (32")? (Yes/No)
Interior door opening width measurements (mm):
26. Door handles are easy to grip? (Yes/No)
27. Automatic door opening devices are provided for interior doors? (Yes/No)
28. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Weight of interior doors allows them to be easily opened? (Yes/No)

29. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Door threshold meets maximum standard of 6 mm (1/4")? (Yes/No)

30. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Corridors have a minimum width of 920 mm (36")? (Yes/No)
Minimum width of the corridor(s) measures (mm):

31. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Interior of the building is free of any protruding objects? (Yes/No)

32. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Voting room is on the same level as the entrance? (Yes/No)

33. If no, electors can access the voting room using an elevator or a level access ramp? (Yes/No)

34. If use of an elevator is required, is a key necessary to operate it? (Yes/No)
If yes, who is the contact person for the key?

35. If electors must use a ramp to access the voting room, this ramp provides:

- Handrail? (Yes/No)
- Non-slip surface? (Yes/No)
- Clear width of 920 mm (36")? (Yes/No)
- What is the width of the ramp (mm):
- A slope of no more than 4.80°? (Yes/No)
- Indicate the steepest result: (# of degrees)

36. [Mandatory accessibility criterion] Interior lighting works? (Yes/No)

37. Wheelchair accessible washroom (Yes/No)
Are there any grab bars? (Yes/No)

Overall evaluation

38. Does this site meet all the mandatory accessibility criteria? (Yes/No)

39. If not, is it possible to modify the site so that it will meet all the mandatory criteria? (Yes/No)

Was the evaluation done on site? (Yes/No)

If yes, when (mm/dd/yy):