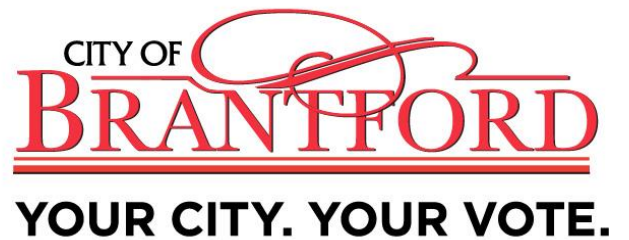


2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Post-Election Report



2022 Post-Election Accessibility Report

Election Accessibility is a key aspect of election administration. Thus, a goal of the 2022 Municipal Election Team was to ensure that electors with a disability were provided the opportunity to vote as independently and efficiently as possible. The 2022 Post-Election Accessibility Report is an extension of the City's commitment to providing open and accessible government.

After the 2018 Election, City staff reviewed accessibility initiatives undertaken during the course of the Election and compiled a report summarizing the findings. The report aimed to identify accessibility barriers that affected electors and candidates, as well as measures that were taken to increase accessibility. For the 2022 election, Election Officials used the findings and recommendations identified in the 2018 report to guide new initiatives to further increase accessibility while once again implementing successful measures that were used in the 2018 Election.

In support of compliance with *the Municipal Elections Act*, staff reviewed *the Accessibility for Ontarians' with Disabilities Act, 2005 S.O. 2004 c. 11 (AODA)* and noted the key definitions of 'barrier' and 'disability' as follows:

"Barrier" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; ("obstacle")

"Disability" means;

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or;
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;The following items were noted as key aspects of the 2018 election where consideration was given to identify, remove and prevent barriers as well as additional measures which will be implemented in the 2022 election

Communication and Information

Pre-Election Plan Noted Items:

- Communication initiatives and information for candidates and electors will be available in alternate formats upon request;
- Accessibility information to be posted on the City's Election website including facility notes collected when inspecting voting locations (lighting, ramps, door access, etc.);
- A link to *the Ontarians with Disabilities Act* will be provided under the Election Related Links tab of the Election site;
- Timely and relevant information on the election, including introduction of internet voting, to be delivered through a series of social media, print, radio announcements, and computer messaging in public locations (ex. Laurier University, Conestoga College, Brantford Public Library);
- Candidates to be provided with an information kit including relevant election information materials and age-friendly campaigning tips;
- Election staff members to be provided with training on how to interact and communicate with persons having various types of disabilities and with persons who use an assistive device or service animal.

Post-Election Review:

- Continue to share election related information across multiple platforms (website, social media, print, radio, billboards) and provide alternative format of all communications upon request to increase accessibility for electors;
- Continue to communicate accessibility barriers and other related information regarding voting locations to electors by placing this information on the City of Brantford Election Website and social media accounts;
- Place an accessibility icon on the Voter Information Notices indicating which locations are most accessible;
- Continue to include resources on election accessibility in the Candidate packages;
- Continue to connect with Community Organizations to provide information relating to accessible voting (Long Term Care / Retirement homes, Conestoga, Laurier).

Voting locations

Pre-Election Plan Noted Items:

- Conduct site visits of all potential voting locations to ensure compliance with the established accessibility check list to review accessibility of locations;
- Where possible, ensure designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location;
- Provide seating at voting stations for individuals who have difficulty standing;
- Provide appropriate signage at all voting locations with extra signage at locations with alternate accessible entrances;

- Provide accessible voting, both facility access and accessible voting equipment, at each of the Advance Voting facilities, which were both “vote anywhere” format;
- Provide a central accessible voting location at City Hall on Election Day, which is a “vote anywhere” poll;
- Provide a low/wide voting area and/or clipboards to assist an individual using a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and securely;
- Voting stations to be equipped with large print voting instructions to aid persons with low vision;
- Assign an Election Greeter to each location to offer assistance to voters throughout the voting process where needed;
- Used a “one-step” online voting verification process.

Post-Election Review:

- Continue to provide a “Vote Anywhere in your Ward” model on Voting Day in 2026. This allowed electors to vote at a voting location that was most accessible to them;
- Exterior and Interior Accessibility Audits should continue to be completed as part of the voting location selection process;
- Secure additional signage for voting locations, including signs directing voters to alternative entrances if necessary;
- Connect with City Departments regarding the use of City facilities as voting locations and communicate the need to ensure maintenance, repairs or construction will not prevent the full accessible use of the facility well in advance in order to prevent last minute changes to locations;
- Explore opportunities to improve access to in-person voting by collaborating with community transit partners (ex. Brantford Lift, Brantford Transit) during the Advanced Vote and Election Day voting period.

Staff training

Pre-Election Plan Noted Items:

- Incorporate provisions to meet accessible customer service standards in all election worker training sessions;
- Election officials to be trained on the City’s Accessible Customer Service Standards and the AODA accessibility regulations;
- Reference material to be included in each training manual;
- Special training to be provided to staff working the Advance Vote on the proper use of the accessible voting equipment;
- Clerk’s staff dedicated to help-desk for call-in assistance during advanced voting period and internet use.

Post-Election Review:

- Continue to include AODA and Sensitivities to Disabilities training as part of the general election staff training that must be completed by all election staff;

- Where possible, provide online modules in lieu of in-person training sessions thus increasing training accessibility by removing location, time and training constraints associated with in person training;
- Emphasize common assistance that election staff can provide including assisting electors in navigating doors / hallways, leaving some voting booths without chairs, providing certain assistive devices like a clipboard to assist with voting.

Voting and voting equipment methods

Pre-Election Plan Noted Items

- Council has approved online voting as an alternative voting method which will reduce barriers connected to travelling to/from a physical voting location;
- Provide fully accessible voting equipment at both Advanced Voting locations and at City Hall on Election Day (ImageCast accessible audio voting equipment with assistive devices – audio tactile interface, sip and puff, pound paddles);
- All Advanced Voting locations and the accessibility poll at City Hall on Election Day were established with a “vote anywhere” format offering enhanced voting opportunity for all voters;
- Proxy voting to be available for the Election;
- Staff to be trained to administer the accessible voting equipment to electors;
- Promote Advanced Voting opportunities for electors with disabilities in all election advertising materials;
- Provide voting opportunities specifically for institutions and retirement homes on Election Day.

Post-Election Report:

- Continue to provide online voting for the entire voting period. In 2022 this was October 3rd – October 24th, 2022;
- Consider adjusting advanced voting periods to provide increased voting opportunities for residents;
- Continue coordinating with school boards in advance of Election Day to address location specific accessibility concerns;
- Continue to welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting places;
- Enlist the BAAC and other partners to communicate when the Voters List revision process is underway as well as the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation Enumeration process to aid in the accuracy of individual voter records.

2022 Pre-Election Plan – Publically Available

In advance of the 2022 Municipal Election, the Clerk prepared a report to Council reviewing the initiatives outlined in this plan and their effectiveness in increasing the accessible voting options as well as removing/reducing barriers to voters. Prior to Council the report was submitted to the City’s Accessibility Committee for feedback and to identify areas of improvement for the next election.

The 2022 Pre-Election Plan can be found on the City of Brantford’s Election Website.

Feedback, recommendations, or suggestions can be forwarded to the Election Management Team at election@brantford.ca or by calling the Clerk's office at 519-759-4150