

2022

A black silhouette of the Peterborough city skyline, featuring various buildings and a central clock tower with a white circular window.

City of Peterborough

Post-Election Accessibility Report

November 2022

Purpose of the Report

This report highlights the ways the City worked to achieve the goals outlined in the Accessibility Report to make the 2022 Municipal and School Board elections accessible for everyone casting a ballot on October 24, 2022.

The City's Election Accessibility Plan was developed to ensure compliance with relevant legislation including the: **Municipal Election Act, 1996;** **Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005;** and Human Rights Code.

The report was also developed within the framework of the City's Accessibility Plan and Election Accessibility Plan. As such, our reports reaffirm the Statement of Commitment adopted by Council on September 10, 2018.

Statement of Commitment

The City of Peterborough is committed to demonstrating leadership for accessibility in the community.

Our goal is to meet the diverse needs of all people, and follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

We will strive to achieve an inclusive environment for our facilities, goods, services, employment, information, and transportation.

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Section 1: Accessibility Initiatives

When planning the 2022 municipal election, the focus of the Clerk's Office was on creating an environment where anyone, regardless of ability, could cast a secret ballot independently. Our commitments were outlined in our 2022 Election Accessibility Plan, published on our website.

This section reiterates those commitments and serves to highlight how we delivered on them.

Customer Service Standard

Voting Methods

The City of Peterborough offered several different ways to cast a ballot in the 2022 Municipal Election to make voting as accessible and convenient as possible. Electors were able to cast a ballot online, 24 hours/day from October 1st - 24th at 8:00 p.m. Electors could also vote with a physical paper ballot at a voting location in their ward on Election Day or in advance. Three advance voting dates were provided and held on Saturday, October 8th, Saturday, October 15th, and Saturday, October 22nd. For advance voting dates, electors could vote at one location in their ward while on election day, there was a minimum of three locations per ward.

Accessible Advance Voting at City Hall

The City offered an Accessible Advance Poll at City Hall, Monday to Friday, the week before the election from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Election staff also attended institutions and retirement homes on Election Day. Internet voting was also available, therefore electors could cast a ballot wherever they had access to a smartphone, tablet, or computer.

The City Hall Accessible Advance Poll was located in the City Boardroom. It offered a quiet, accessible, well-lit location for 76 people to cast a ballot. It also featured a voting tabulator equipped with special assistive devices to allow any elector to independently cast a ballot.

Institutions and Retirement Homes

The **Municipal Elections Act, 1996** mandates that the City attend Long-Term Care Facilities and Retirement Homes in the City of Peterborough to serve those electors. Staff attended 15 of these locations on Election Day and served 397 electors. Two long-term care facilities, Chartwell Jackson Creek Retirement Residence and Extendicare, utilized online voting exclusively due to COVI-19 outbreaks. Fairhaven used online voting specifically for outbreak floors while in-person voting was still available to other residents. In preparation for an outbreak situation, long-term care facilities were given the option to have their staff trained to administer the vote in their location. Three facilities utilized this option (PRHC, Marycrest at Inglewood, and Riverview Manor).

In addition, Clerk's Office staff identified 5 additional locations that were primarily occupied by vulnerable older adults. These additional locations were offered voting in advance of Election Day to residents of these buildings exclusively. 223 voters took advantage of these opportunities.

Voting Assistance

Anyone requiring assistance to vote was able to be assisted by a support person. The person assisting the elector completed an oral oath with the Deputy Returning Officer prior to providing any such assistance. Electors were also entitled to be accompanied by a service animal.

Online Voting

Online voting was available twenty-four hours a day from October 1 until October 24, 2022 at 8:00 p.m. Online voting was compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0). WCAG 2.0 includes standards such as: organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information (i.e., audio). The voter module was coded with XHTML transitional document type and conformed to all W3C web standards. Additionally, persons who had assistive technology setup on their personal mobile devices, tablets and computers would have been able to use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

Customer Service Feedback

Election Staff encouraged anyone to submit feedback about any aspect of their voting experience using the Customer Service Feedback Form. It was available at every voting location. **Section 2: Feedback Form** discusses the format of the form, and **Section 3: Feedback Responses** outlines the responses we received from the public.

Training

All staff carrying out election duties were provided manuals explaining how to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities were served in a way that accommodates their individual needs and measures we undertook so that everyone could cast a ballot independently. Manual topics included:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services; and
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

Information and Communications Standard

Alternate Formats

The City of Peterborough did not receive any requests for alternative formats to be provided.

Large Print

Printed material generated by the City of Peterborough was provided in Arial, 12-point font, and was available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points - or larger upon request. For the 2022 election, no requests for large print were made.

Web Content

Information published by the City on the election website, were all WCAG 2.0 compliant. Web content was also mobile optimized and screen-reader friendly.

COVID-19 Measures

Staff were provided masks with a clear window over the mouth area to assist electors that would benefit from reading lips.

Service Disruptions

Unforeseen circumstances beyond the City's control resulted in a temporary service disruption of the City's website. Despite the voting website still being operational, services were extended at physical voting locations and online for an additional 30 minutes. Notice of the disruption was disbursed through the media, and information relayed to site supervisors.

Employment Standard

This standard tells employers that they must make accessible accommodations available, if requested, in all stages of the employment life cycle (e.g., assessment, selection and retention).

- The City of Peterborough is committed to identifying and removing barriers so that all future and current employees can reach their full potential
- Ensure everyone working the election receives training material on accessibility

The City of Peterborough is an organization that strives to embrace the spirit of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. We are an equal opportunity employer committed to building an inclusive and barrier-free environment in which all individuals have access to the City's goods, services, and facilities.

Transportation Standard

Proximity of Public Transit to the Voting Location

Proximity of the voting location to accessible public transit routes was an important consideration when selecting voting locations. Free transit was also offered to voters by presenting their Voter Notification Card on advance voting dates and on Election Day.

Parking

Accessible parking spaces were clearly identifiable and easy to see from the road and marked with the International Symbol of Access. Routine checks of routes to the entrance of the Voting Location were conducted by election staff throughout the day.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

Voting Location Inspection Checklists

Site audits for all Voting Locations were completed and each location was scored according to suitability. Of the 26 locations considered, a total of 16 locations were selected based on criteria that included regard to accessibility for people with disabilities.

Entrance to the Voting Location

All voting locations selected had an accessible path of entry, with doors wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through easily, door hardware operable by a person with limited dexterity and/or doors with a power assist function. Voting locations with stairs included a ramp and/or elevator to ensure equal access for voters.

Election staff aimed to select voting locations that complied with current accessibility requirements of Ontario's Building Code and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, to the best of the City's control. Due to limited availability of newly constructed buildings with fully accessible assembly spaces, some voting locations had features that only complied with older accessibility standards.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth was level and easily traversed. All voting areas were well lit, and sturdy seating with back rests were available. Magnifying sheets and book lights for additional illumination were also made available to assist any individual with low vision.

Section 2: Feedback Form

The Customer Service Feedback Form was designed for several purposes. It was designed to provide staff with immediate feedback that they could use to mitigate any issues that developed during voting day. It also helps the City plan for the next election.

The form consisted of two separate sections. The first section included questions based on a Likert-type, or slider scale where people could rate their experience on key items such as: accessibility of the location, familiarity/comfort with the location itself, and overall interactions with staff. The scale ranged from 1 – Disagree to 5 – Agree.

The first question asked electors about their experience dealing with the overall accessibility of the voting location:

This voting location was accessible. Doors provided easy access, there was sufficient light, and there was smooth, unobstructed access to the voting location.

It was designed to get people to think about the physical space of the location, their ease of access navigating site, and to evaluate our assessment of what we thought when we conducted our accessibility inspections earlier in the year.

The second question related to the familiarity/comfort with the location itself:

This voting location met my expectations as a voter. It was convenient for me to access from home/work.

Convenience and the extent to which voters were likely to be familiar with the location were factors we considered in our assessment of sites. Having people know where locations are translates into better turnout and less lines because people have choice of where they cast a ballot.

The third question asked about their experience with staff at voting locations:

Election staff met my expectations as a voter. People were polite and friendly and met my needs as an elector.

Customer Service is important for many reasons, but for elections it informs how the electorate will view future voting experiences and how they perceive the City in general.

The second section allowed free-form responses from electors to provide their comments. The comment section began on the front and additional space was provided on the entire second side of the form.

A sample of the Customer Service Feedback Form used during the election is provided on the next page.

Election Customer Service Feedback Form

Thank you for voting in the City of Peterborough. As we strive to meet the needs of all electors in our community, we both welcome and value the input of all those who cast a ballot.

Please complete the questions below. You can submit it at the voting location, e-mail it to election2022@peterborough.ca or mail it to the Clerk's Office:
500 George St. N., Peterborough, ON K9H 3R9

General Information

Voting Location: _____

Date (yyyy-mm-dd): _____ Time: _____

Feedback

1. This voting location was accessible. Doors provided easy access, there was sufficient light, and there was smooth, unobstructed access to the voting location.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 Agree 5

2. This voting location met my expectations as a voter. It was convenient for me to access from home.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 Agree 5

3. Election Officials met my expectations as a voter. Staff were polite and friendly and met my needs as an elector.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 Agree 5

Comments _____

Elector Contact Information (Optional)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Resolution Details (To be completed by Election Officials)

EL 472 – Customer Service Feedback Form



Section 3: Feedback Responses

Election Day

On Election Day, 5,157 people cast a ballot at 16 voting locations throughout the City. Of those people who voted, 36 completed paper copies of Feedback Forms at voting locations. Two people did not provide any values for Questions 1-3, these people only left comments. One person only provided values for Questions 1 and 2, but did not provide any value for Question 3, this person also left a comment. The following provides a summary of the responses.

Question 1: This voting location was accessible. Doors provided easy access, there was sufficient light, and there was smooth, unobstructed access to the voting location.

Question 2: This voting location met my expectations as a voter. It was convenient for me to access from home/work.

For both Questions 1 & 2:

- 31 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)
- 1 individual provided a score of 4
- 2 individuals provided a score of 1 (Disagree)

Question 3: Election staff met my expectations as a voter. People were polite and friendly and met my needs as an elector.

- 32 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)
- 1 individual provided a score of 4

Advance Voting – October 8th

On Saturday, October 8th, 575 electors voted in the advanced voting opportunities in the 5 locations offered (1 per ward). 20 people completed paper copies of Feedback Forms at voting locations. One person did not provide any values for Questions 1-3, this person only left comments. One person only provided values for Questions 1 and 3, but did not provide any value for Question 2, this person also left a comment. The following provides a summary of the responses.

Question 1: This voting location was accessible. Doors provided easy access, there was sufficient light, and there was smooth, unobstructed access to the voting location.

- 18 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)
- 1 individual provided a score of 4

Question 2: This voting location met my expectations as a voter. It was convenient for me to access from home/work.

- All 18 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)

Question 3: Election staff met my expectations as a voter. People were polite and friendly and met my needs as an elector.

- All 19 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)

Advance Voting – October 15th

On Saturday, October 15th, 786 electors voted in the advanced voting opportunities in the 5 locations offered (1 per ward). 15 people completed paper copies of Feedback Forms at voting locations. The following provides a summary of the responses.

Question 1: This voting location was accessible. Doors provided easy access, there was sufficient light, and there was smooth, unobstructed access to the voting location.

- 12 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)
- 1 individual provided a score of 4
- 2 individuals provided a score of 1 (Disagree)

Question 2: This voting location met my expectations as a voter. It was convenient for me to access from home/work.

- 11 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)
- 2 individuals provided a score of 3
- 2 individuals provided a score of 1 (Disagree)

Question 3: Election staff met my expectations as a voter. People were polite and friendly and met my needs as an elector.

- 11 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree)
- 1 individual provided a score of 4
- 3 individuals provided a score of 1 (Disagree)

Advance Voting – October 22nd

On Saturday, October 22nd, 762 electors voted in the advanced voting opportunities in the 5 locations offered (1 per ward). 6 people completed paper copies of Feedback Forms at voting locations. The following provides a summary of the responses.

Question 1: This voting location was accessible. Doors provided easy access, there was sufficient light, and there was smooth, unobstructed access to the voting location.

Question 2: This voting location met my expectations as a voter. It was convenient for me to access from home/work.

Question 3: Election staff met my expectations as a voter. People were polite and friendly and met my needs as an elector.

- All 6 individuals provided a score of 5 (Agree) for all 3 questions

Advance and Election Day Comments

Of the 77 completed Feedback Forms received by staff, 46 wrote comments for feedback. Their feedback was reviewed and organized into categories outlined below. Several comments touched on a few categories:

Enjoyed Voting In Person

Most people leaving comments did so to express that they were satisfied with the process overall. These people expressed satisfaction in the service they received by staff, and the selection of locations. Listed below are the comments received regarding this:

- **Volunteers/employees were extremely pleasant and helpful** (Voter at Westdale United Church)
- **Transit service that you provided was very much appreciate, I vote in advance.** (Voter at Northview Community Church)
- **Very friendly and easy to vote** (Voter at Riverview Park and Zoo)

Online Voting Problems/Criticisms

On election night, the City of Peterborough's website was not functional for a brief period within the last hour of voting. Online voting and in-person voting locations extended their closing to accept voters until 8:30pm. This allowed electors that were not able to vote online to still have the ability to visit a voting location. 11 people utilized a voting location after 8:00 pm, and 23 electors were able to vote online after 8:00 pm. The last online elector finished voting at 8:33 pm. Voting locations received feedback regarding this matter:

- **Online voting website did not work** (Voter at Lions Community Centre)
- **Could not login to vote website crashed, could not vote in person despite arriving promptly at 9:00 pm no notification given to voters or apparently staff to allow vote to happen.** (Voter at Edmison Heights Public School)

Location Layout

Due to COVID-19, many safety protocols were put into place, including ways to improve how people moved through physical voting locations. To improve social distancing, where able, electors entered and exited through different doors. Floor plans were also reviewed to utilize space effectively to promote social distancing and avoid electors coming into contact with each other. Voting locations received feedback regarding this matter.

- **Brought my elderly mother to vote - distances beyond reason for her walking could be accommodated for less walking.** (Voter at Healthy Planet Arena)
- **Great setup. Super staff** (Voter at Peterborough Public Library)

Facilities

As previously mentioned, 26 locations were evaluated in the City of Peterborough, while 16 sites were chosen to be voting locations. Criteria for site selection was based on accessibility, technology needs, location to other sites, and voter capacity. Listed below

are examples of actions taken to enhance facilities to promote customer service to electors:

- Reserved parking spaces for voters at the Healthy Planet Arena during a hockey tournament on October 8th.
- For doors without power assist, greeters were positioned appropriately to open doors for electors.
- Multiple “Vote Here” signs were placed at the perimeter of voting locations.
- Tape was used to secure cables and cords to prevent tripping hazards.
- City maps indicated the closest bus stop to voting locations.

Voting locations received feedback regarding this matter.

- **Parking was TERRIBLE! Not a great venue for voting when hockey tournament on!** (Voter at Healthy Planet Arena)
- **Parking can be difficult in this location** (Voter at Peterborough Public Library)
- **Otters provided friendly atmosphere.** (Voter at Riverside Park & Zoo)

City Hall Accessible Voting Location – Feedback

While customer service forms were available to voters, an election staff member also provided the following feedback from observations at the City Hall Accessible poll:

- A voter who used the audio tactile interface (ATI) game controller style console noted the audible verbiage included a confusing phrase. The audio uses the phrase “there is x contest(s) left...”. The word “left” made it difficult to follow the instructions, as there is also a general instruction to use the “left arrow”. The flow of the sentences by the digital voice is not as smooth as how a human typically organizes sentence structure, making the two meanings of the word “left” confusing to follow along in the audio queues. The voter suggested the audio be revised to use the word “remaining” instead of “left”, as in “there is x contest(s) remaining...”
- A voter who used the audio tactile interface (ATI) game controller style console noted the buttons on the controller were not working properly. The voter was following the instructions and pressing the buttons, but some buttons were not responsive to a light to medium press. One button required a very hard press to navigate through the voting process, that required the assistance of an election worker. The voter was frustrated they could not vote independently.
- A voter noted a shorter travel distance is needed from the accessible parking space in the rear City Hall parking lot to the voting room, and better wayfinding signage is needed to direct people to the public entrance and to the voting room. The voter was out of breath and frustrated after discovering the rear entrance facing the City Hall parking lot was locked to the public. Election staff added exterior and interior signage after receiving the feedback.

- A voter noted the barrier-free push button door operator to the universal washroom beside the voting room was not operable. Election staff notified Facilities staff and posted a notice of temporary service disruption.
- A voter at the City Hall noted it was poor planning to use a second floor space located some distance from a building entrance, as an accessible voting location.
- A voter noted it was impossible to independently navigate to/from the specialized transit drop-off/pick-up location to the voting location. Election staff needed other City staff to assist voters and recommend a plan is developed with Transit to communicate a consistent drop off/pick up zone.

The feedback received pertaining to the accessible equipment has been forwarded to our vendor, while the feedback regarding the facilities has been reviewed for future election planning.

Summary

This report which is legislated by the **Municipal Elections Act, 1996**, is provided for information purposes. It fulfils the Municipality's obligation to report on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

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