City Clerk Ulli Watkiss

Good morning and welcome to our 2nd Accessibility Outreach Network session. Thank you for coming today.

Much was learned in 2010 and there is a great deal more to understand in order to provide more choices for all electors to vote confidently, conveniently, independently and privately. This is just the beginning as we continue to develop new initiatives for an accessible election.

This is a forum to exchange election information, identify voting barriers, build strong partnerships and encourage feedback. We are committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have equal access to elections and the ability to vote privately and independently. We are here today to continue the dialogue.

We look forward to working with you and now Bonita will discuss our 2014 plan in more detail.
Today, I'll be providing you with an overview of the Election Accessibility Plan, the lessons learned and how we will move forward for 2014.

In 2010, we formalized an Accessibility Plan to implement and communicate a strategy for providing services to electors and candidates with disabilities. As we move forward with planning the 2014 Election we will continue to build on our accessibility plan. Its development was based largely on our experience in 2010 and the vital feedback we received from the community.

We learned early on that consulting with the disability community is a key success factor. Your knowledge, experience and willingness to share contributed to a more effective Accessibility Plan. We also learned that while groups and organizations serving people with disabilities were effective at communicating our messages, we found it was difficult to reach individuals not associated with any agencies or organizations. Securing a sufficient number of accessible voting locations was challenging because the infrastructure of buildings in Toronto has not kept pace with the growing recognition of the need to retrofit buildings. Finally, we found that providing election staff with accessible customer service training was critical and it was of great assistance to voting place staff when serving electors with disabilities. These lessons learned were integrated into our 2014 Accessibility Plan along with the feedback we received from the public which I will discuss in more detail.

Our Plan consists of 6 key components; public consultations, communications & information, assistance for candidates, voting places, accessibility training for election officials and voting provisions for electors with disabilities. This plan is continuously updated as we receive feedback. You can review the plan on our website www.toronto.ca/elections/accessibility
This first component is public consultations. It is critical for Election Services to consult with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons with disabilities in order to gain a better understanding of the barriers they face and develop a plan to remove or prevent those barriers. In 2010 the Accessibility Plan was circulated to over 200 organizations and individuals and was modified based on the feedback received and we hope to do the same again this year. We also plan to attend meetings, events and fairs throughout the year to demonstrate and raise awareness about our plan and the voting technology available. Meetings like this help up to maintain an ongoing dialogue with you.
The second component of the plan is Communications and Information. Our goal is to continue to not only communicate key accessibility messages but to ensure messages are available in various formats such as Braille, large font, and multiple languages. We redesigned our website to make it easier to navigate, more user friendly and WCAG compliant. We continue to produce videos with open captioning and audio components. All our videos are posted on the web and some have ASL interpretation.
The third component of our plan is Assistance to Candidates. Candidates are provided with information on how to make their campaigns accessible to the public as well as providing candidates with election information in accessible and alternative formats. We ensure that candidate information sessions are held in accessible locations and special accommodations are available upon request.
The fourth component of the plan is accessibility training for election officials. Over 12,000 election staff will be hired to work advance vote and election day. Staff will receive training to build awareness of the importance of accessible customer service and how to best serve people with disabilities. The AODA, customer service standards and serving people with disabilities messaging will be incorporated into training materials, classroom training and online training. The Accessible Customer Service Etiquette Handbook will be provided to every election staff member. For those staff who have a disability, accommodations will be provided upon request.
The fifth component of the plan is voting options for electors with disabilities. Recognizing that different individuals with disabilities have different needs. There is a variety of options and we want to provide individuals the opportunity to select the one they are most comfortable with. We recognize that one does not fit all.

a. Internet and telephone voting will be available for the first time during the advance vote period. I will provide more detail about this initiative later in the presentation.

b. A voter assist terminal will be available in each of the 45 wards during advance vote and on election day. These terminals allow individuals to mark their ballot privately and independently by using one or more of its features. The features include an audio component, a Braille key pad, a sip and puff device and a rocker paddle. It also has the ability to zoom in on the ballot and change the contrast. Ballot transfers will be accommodated for individuals who wish to vote at a location that has a voter assist terminal.

c. Staff will be trained to welcome the use of support persons and services animals in voting places, assistance to electors with disabilities will also be provided as required.

d. Proxy voting is available for those individuals who can not get to the voting location during advance or on election day.

e. Curbside voting is available for individuals unable to enter the voting place for any reason.

f. Voting opportunities in institutions and retirement homes will be provided.

g. Lastly, internet and telephone voting will be available for persons with disabilities.
The sixth component of the plan is ensuring voting places are accessible. This election, staff inspected over 1,800 voting locations of which approximately 1,650 were selected and deemed accessible. Where necessary modifications will be made such as, installing ramps, providing customer service officers to assist when automatic door openers were not available, providing accessible parking where possible and indicating which entrance is most accessible. Our team will be conducting another round of voting place inspections this summer and the list of selected voting places will be posted on our website for feedback in June. We encourage you to review the list and raise any concerns. Our goal is to ensure that each location is accessible and that all the necessary modifications are made.

In the event of disruptions to service or last minute changes notices will be posted on the City’s website, on our social media accounts and at the site of the disruption.

A dedicated contact centre will also be in place to address any accessibility issues, concerns or complaints that might arise.
Our major priority for choosing a location is that the space is accessible AND available. We also need to ensure that the locations we choose are big enough to accommodate the number of voters, are identifiable by the community and people feel safe going to the building.

Our major challenges is the aging infrastructure as building and schools are not accessible and no money has been invested in their renovations. Also aging chairlifts are not reliable and building are not maintaining them and are unable to get replacement parts.

Last summer, staff went out to inspect all 1,562 locations that were used in 2010 to collect specs on accessibility and see if anything had changed. The inspectors are responsible for ensuring that the space is appropriate and considered accessible as guided by the AODA.

Each voting place must have an accessible route of travel to make it easy for persons using mobility devices to access the buildings with ease. We ensure that the surface is stable, firm, slip-resistant, acceptable slope and the path of travel is clear of obstructions such as pre-mounted signs, cement blocks, parked cars, garbage dumpsters etc.

Each voting place must have at least one accessible route of travel connecting the accessible parking space(s) or passenger drop-off areas to the building's accessible entrance. It is essential for people who have difficulty walking or who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

Each voting place must have accessible parking with appropriate signage. If there are no accessible parking spaces, traffic cones would be used to turn a regular parking space into an accessible one. We need to ensure that electors with disabilities do not expend unnecessary effort travelling in the wrong direction.

Each voting place must have at least one accessible entrance that is connected to an accessible route. It must be wide enough to allow people who use crutches, a cane, walker, scooter or wheelchair to use it. Ideally we will source a location that doesn’t need to be modified, however, if we find a location is required in a community, we will have our building experts assess the location to see if they can build a custom ramp - they look at the space in front of the door, the safety of the area. We are only able to ramp an entrance with a maximum of 2 steps as the space required makes it difficult to go any bigger.

### Accessible Voting Locations

- 620 condominiums and apartments
- 560 schools
- 180 nursing homes and seniors residences
- 120 religious buildings
- 80 community centres
- 30 libraries
- 20 city facilities
- 50 other

### Accessibility Criteria:
- Parking
- Route of travel
- Slope and surface
- Entrances
- Level access
- Power door operator
For the upcoming election, we will be adding an additional 100 locations, 11 large ramps, 47 transition strips, and hiring 650 Accessibility Officers to open doors, operate elevators and chair lifts.

To ensure accessibility, the list of 2014 voting locations will be posted in July. We would like your feedback and input if anything has changed about the location. It is an opportunity for you to raise any concerns you may have.
We are currently working together on the implementation phase of the project and have just developed the preliminary procedures. The timeline for implementation is extremely tight. System customization and development has begun and testing will be completed by August. In parallel, staff are developing and implementing an extensive education, communication and outreach plan. Now that the project is underway, we will continue to consult with you on the process, implementation and the outreach strategy.

2014:
-April to September: development of communications and education materials
-June 1: Legislative deadline, clerk provided candidates with internet voting procedures
-June 1: website updated and internet voting procedures posted
-End of June – eVote usability testing begins
-August: Public demo site available
-September 8 – eVote Registration begins
-October 14 – 19: eVote
At the meeting in May, I gave a detailed presentation on process for Internet and Telephone Voting. For those of you that were not here, I would like to do a quick review.

As I mentioned in the last meeting Internet Voting will take 3 easy steps but you need to be prepared. Internet and Telephone voting is only available during the advance vote period from October 14 to 19th

**Step 1:** The first step is ensure that you’re on the voter’s list. We encourage you to use the new application voterlookup.ca. Carole will provide you with more details later in the presentation. You can update your information or add yourself to the list if your name does not appear. It is easy to use and will help ensure that the voters’ list is as accurate as possible. Make sure to do this early, after September 2, there is another opportunity but it is paper based and quite time consuming.

**Step 2:** The next step is to register to vote beginning on September 8. This is how you will set up your account. You will submit your ID by uploading a picture or scanning a document that has your name and Toronto address. A PIN will be sent to you and you will need to create an access code.

**Step 3:** You will vote online and review your ballot and receive a receipt.
To ensure the success of eVote, we are conducting a series of end user testing of the system being developed by Scytl. At the last meeting, many of you had expressed an interest in participating in the test and were contacted to check your availability and interest.

This will be a very fast process with a quick turnaround. Participants will conduct the independent testing at their home or wherever they have access to a computer and the internet. They will be asked to run through a series of evaluations to provide feedback on the system’s functionality, ease of use, design and their overall impressions. We want to ensure that the system is accessible and can work with a variety of assistive devices.

We are conducting the testing in 3 phases to be completed by the end of June. Phase 1 is a test of the voting application, Phase 2 is a test of the Registration Application and Phase 3 will be a participant debrief to provide a larger forum for discussion of the observations from the tests.

The feedback will be shared with the Scytl and where possible changes will be integrated. We will also share the outcomes of the testing at the next Accessibility Network Session.

Thanks to all who have agreed to participate.
Moving forward we will be focusing on raising awareness about accessible voting options and the importance of providing an accessible election. We would like to continue to host these meetings as we move through the implementation phases of internet and telephone voting. We are open to suggestions about content and format regarding these meetings. We want them to be valuable to you and your organizations and we want this to be an ongoing mutually beneficial partnership that will continue beyond the duration of the election year.

Our communications team is in the process of developing postcards and posters to promote these new voting opportunities in addition to the elections material we’ve already created. We are happy to share these resources with you and encourage you to distribute them to your networks. There are many other ways in which we can work together to share key election messages and we would like to meet with you individually to discuss your unique opportunities.

We are excited to promote voterlookup.ca and MyVote. Voterlookup.ca makes it easy to get on the voters’ list and confirm your information. MyVote will also be a great tool to provide access to key election information in one central location. We would appreciate your support in promoting both these tools.

We will be attending community events throughout the year to demonstrate voting equipment and raise awareness about the various accessible voting opportunities. We are also available to attend your meetings and events and can tailor our presentations to your group depending on their needs and interests. Please keep us informed of the projects and initiatives you’re working on and don’t hesitate to contact us if you think we can be of assistance. We are committed to working with you and your organizations and hope you can help us reach the disabilities community.
# Contact Us

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