

January 25, 2016

By-Election
Ward 1

Accessible Election Procedures

Debbie Shields, City Clerk/Returning Officer

Accessible Election Procedures

Procedure Objective

The City of Pickering is committed to providing all residents with the equal opportunity to vote. Persons with disabilities have the same right to vote as everyone else. These procedures apply to an election conducted by the City of Pickering involving the conduct of an accessible election. The City Clerk may provide for interpretations of these procedures, in accordance with the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

General Election Procedures

- Election procedures must respect the dignity and independence of electors and the election process should ensure that these procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity. Election processes must also be in a manner that takes into account a person's disability.
- Citizens have the opportunity to provide feedback on the City's election accessibility procedures. Feedback may be submitted to the Clerk's Office in person or electronically. All feedback received will be reviewed by the City Clerk who will respond to the elector or candidate providing an anticipated action and timeframe for a full response where appropriate.
- Candidates and electors with disabilities will be able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that takes into account their disability. The format will be agreed upon between the requester and the City Clerk and must be requested at least 14 days prior to requiring the documentation.
- Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

Voting Locations

Section 45(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* requires that in choosing a location for a voting place, the clerk shall have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. City staff will be conducting voting location inspections to ensure that each polling location is accessible. Inspections will examine all aspects of the voting location including the provision of accessible parking, accessible entrances and ensuring that there are no physical obstacles. The City will allow for the use of service animals and support persons at all voting and election locations.

Parking

Designated accessible parking will conform to building code standards, will be available close to the entrance of each voting location and will be clearly posted. If a voter has an accessible parking permit and there are no more accessible parking spaces, they may park along the curb but, not if designated as a fire route and not if blocking the flow of traffic.

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Entrance to the Voting Place

The accessible entrance is to be used as the main entrance for everyone. Every effort will be made to ensure that the entrance is wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through and the door hardware is to be accessible and operated by a person using a closed fist. If the doors are heavy, awkward to open, or have handles that are out of reach, where possible they will be propped open in a safe manner or an election official will be available to assist with the opening of doors.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth shall be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit and seating made available. Accessible voting booths will be available at each voting location. These booths will provide a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively. Large print will be used on instruction sheets. Magnifying sheets will be made available to assist any individuals with low vision.

Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting place. In addition, the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) may assist the voter in casting their vote, if required. The DRO will determine, in conjunction with the individual, the extent to which they need assistance and the best way this assistance can be provided.

Voting by Proxy

Persons with disabilities that are unable to attend a voting place may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his/her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form that is available at the Clerk's Office. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before the City Clerk at One The Esplanade, between the hours of 8:30-4:30. Once the form has been completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location, or at the poll of the person for whom the proxy is voting on Voting Day (January 25th). The appointment of a proxy may only be made after 2:00 pm on Nomination Day (December 11th) and does not remain in force after Voting Day.

Election Officials

In accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Regulation 429/07, the City must provide accessible customer service training for all election staff, including election officials and third parties. The scope of the training shall include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities. Election officials will also become familiar with and follow the City's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

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Notice of Temporary Disruptions

Municipalities must provide notice of temporary disruptions of service which include the reason, anticipated duration, a description of alternatives and must be placed in a conspicuous location. In the event that there is a temporary disruption of service during the election, the City must provide adequate notice which includes the disruption of access to voting locations, website or telephone interruptions and access to City Hall. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

2016 Ward 1 Municipal By-election

During the 2016 Ward 1 Municipal By-election, the City of Pickering is implementing a number of accessible features. Advance voting opportunities will be held in January (dates to be determined). During these days, the City will have available Accessible Voting using the Image Cast Precinct BMD-Audio Tabulator for electors who require accessible voting features.

Accessible Voting Technologies - Advance Voting

The Advance Voting location will be equipped with a Ballot Marking Device (BMD) for voters with disabilities. The BMD produces a human and machine readable marked paper ballot from a blank sheet of paper, completely indistinguishable from a paper ballot marked by hand. The voter uses the appropriate assistive input device to control the voting session and select votes. The Audio-Tactile Interface (ATI) includes a set of headphones and handheld controller that the voter uses to interact with the system. Additional interfaces such as Sip 'n' Puff or Paddle Buttons for voters will also be available.

When a voter wishes to use the accessible voting feature the following procedures are completed by the Election Official.

- The Deputy Returning Officer will draw a line through a blank ballot, clearly mark it as "Accessible" and present it to the elector (or his or her support person) with a secrecy folder. The elector will then proceed to the Ballot Tabulation Officer who will take the accessible ballot and place it within the envelope marked "Accessible";
- The Ballot Tabulation Officer will provide the elector with the appropriate accessible ballot marking feature (ATI, Sip 'n' Puff or Paddle Buttons), as well as verbally instruct them on how to operate the assistive device;
- To initiate the ballot, the Ballot Tabulation Officer will use the security key to initiate the accessible ballot marking feature. From the list of ballot codes available, the Ballot Tabulation Officer will select the proper ballot (face) for that elector;
- The voter will use the appropriate accessible ballot marking feature to mark a ballot. Once the voter has made and reviewed their selections, the BMD will print

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a human and machine readable paper ballot via the printer attached to the BMD. This marked paper ballot will be placed into a secrecy folder. The ballot will be positioned so that the Initial Box is visible while maintaining the confidentiality of the voter selections; and

- The Ballot Tabulation Officer will initial the ballot and insert it into the vote tabulator for processing whereby all pertinent sections within this procedure with respect to the processing of a ballot by way of a vote tabulator will apply.

While an accessible voting session is in process, the tabulator can simultaneously process paper ballots inserted by regular voters, allowing the single tabulator to handle both voting channels and maintain the flow of voters.

Accessible Voting Technologies – Voting Day

On Election Day and at the City Clerk's discretion, the Advance voting equipment will be set up and used following all noted procedures so that accessible voting is available to a voter. The voter must notify the City Clerk prior to Election Day that they could not attend any Advance Voting days due to circumstances beyond their control.

Contact Information

Clerk's Office staff are available to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election and can be reached at;

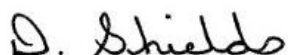
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905.420.4660, ext. 2019
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Legislative Services Division
One The Esplanade
Pickering, ON L1V 6K7

Declaration

In accordance with Section 12(1) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, I hereby certify that the attached procedures shall be followed in conducting the 2016 Ward 1 Municipal By-election in the City of Pickering.



Debbie Shields
City Clerk/Returning Officer

NOVEMBER 2015
Date