



## Staff Report

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**Report To:** General Government Committee

**Date of Meeting:** January 9, 2023

**Report Number:** LGS-004-23

**Submitted By:** Rob Maciver, Deputy CAO / Municipal Solicitor

**Reviewed By:** Mary-Anne Dempster, CAO

**By-law Number:**

**File Number:**

**Resolution#:**

**Report Subject:** 2022 Municipal Elections – Post-Election Accessibility Report

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### Recommendation:

1. That Report LGS-004-23, and any related delegations or communication items, be received; and
2. That a copy of Report LGS-004-23 be placed on the municipal website.

## Report Overview

This report is intended to provide information regarding Clarington's 2022 Municipal Elections, specifically as it pertains to initiatives that were incorporated into the electoral process to provide greater accessibility and inclusivity for Clarington electors.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 In February 2022, Council received Report [LGS-003-22](#), which outlined Clarington's 2022 Municipal Elections accessibility plan in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA). The following is an excerpt from the MEA:
  - 12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.
  - 12.1 (2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.
  - 12.1 (3) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular 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.
- 1.2 Staff provide the following report as information only, in accordance with the MEA.
- 1.3 Clarington's 2022 Municipal Elections were conducted via internet and telephone voting. Ten Election Assistance Centres (EACs) were open on Voting Day (October 24), with a combination of those EACs and other locations being open on varying dates from Tuesday, October 18 until Saturday, October 22. Although EACs were spread out throughout the Municipality, voters were able to attend any EAC to receive the assistance they needed or to vote. Clarington Municipal Library Staff were also trained on how to assist voters, which provided additional locations and hours for voters to seek assistance, and to vote. Clarington Election Officials also attended six Special Voting Locations (retirement / nursing homes and the hospital).

## 2. Election

### Accessibility Review

- 2.1 To ensure dignity, integration, independence, and fairness, and provide an equal opportunity for all Clarington voters, the Clerk's Division undertook several initiatives during the 2022 Clarington Municipal Elections.
- 2.2 Clarington's 2022 Municipal Election permitted voters to vote from home, allowing people to use their own assistive devices, as needed.
- 2.3 Clarington had 1,928 more votes cast in 2022 than in the 2018 Municipal Elections. The voter turnout percentage was slightly lower in 2022 (28% in 2022, 28.5% in 2018) because Clarington had 8,098 more voters on the Voters' List in 2022, compared to 2018.
- 2.4 The Clerk's Division were able to meet, or exceed, the suggestions made in the 2022 Clarington Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan and all items in the 2022 Plan will be considered for the 2026 Plan. The highlights include the following:

Action number from Plan	Action	Details
3.2	Accessibility Advisory Committee will review and provide input on the accessibility initiatives.	The Committee reviewed, and endorsed, the 2022 Clarington Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan and members attended the internet / telephone voting demonstration in June 2022.
3.3	Use an accessibility checklist for reviewing potential EACs.	The checklist ensured that all features of the EACs were inspected.

Action number from Plan	Action	Details
4.5	Ensure communication material was available in alternate formats and free of charge.	<p>All election forms and materials were created in accessible formats.</p> <p>Each candidate was provided with a hardcopy of the candidate information package. Additionally, these materials were also posted on the website and offered in electronic format.</p> <p>Communications were distributed via all methods, including, print, the website, via video, email, community signs, etc. See below for a full list of advertisements.</p>
4.8	Promote the election through various engagement opportunities.	<p>Clerk's Division Staff attended, daytime and weekend community events and conducted revision days at the Special Voting Locations and at Wilmot Creek.</p> <p>Clerk's Division Staff also conducted mock elections (allowing residents to try the internet voting system)</p>
4.12	Post all election information on the Municipality's Election website.	All election information was posted and maintained on the election website Clarington.net/votes and met the WCAG 2.0 requirements.
4.15	Municipal election website will have a dedicated accessibility section.	The website had a designated "Accessibility" button at the top right of each page, which took people directly to the Accessibility information.

Action number from Plan	Action	Details
4.28	Internet / telephone voting allows voters to cast their ballot from anywhere with an internet connection or touch-tone telephone, whether the voter is ill, works days or nights, has a disability, or has trouble travelling.	Allowing voters to vote from anywhere allowed them to vote using their systems and devices that they use for everyday life. See below for some examples of how this helped voters.
4.32	Telephone voting was an option for voters who could not use the internet for any reason, including bad eyesight.	791 voters (4%) voted via the telephone.
4.46	A minimum of one voting booth per EAC shall be wheelchair or scooter accessible.	Scooters were observed using these voting booths with some voters commenting that they appreciated the access.
4.56	Note pads and pens will be available at all EACs to assist in communicating with voters who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.	Election Officials did assist a couple of voters who were deaf or deafened and used the note pads and pens provided to communicate with them. They were provided the assistance they needed and voted without issue.

- 2.5 The Clerk's Division will continue to learn, develop, and adjust our approaches to meet the needs of voters with disabilities.

### Communication / Advertising Activities

- 2.6 As this was the first internet / telephone voting election for the Municipality of Clarington, the Election Team decided to increase the number, and method, of communications about the election. As a result, Election Officials, working with Clarington's Communications Division, released or conducted the following communication activities.

- Newspaper Advertisements
  - 33 advertisements were run from March to October 2022 in the Clarington This Week and Orono Times (the Orono Times shuts down for two weeks during the summer, which is why the total number of advertisements is odd). These included several legislated advertisements about the nomination period and the positions to be elected.
- Clarington also conducted a Metroland Website Takeover on October 19 (sample included in Attachment 1), which was a full digital takeover of durhamregion.com, where the Clarington Election information was included on all the webpages. This resulted in 93,184 Impressions and 206 clicks.
- Tax insert advertisement (Attachment 2)
  - 35,512 packages containing the tax insert with the election information were sent.
- Portable Banners – 8 banners were created, displaying 3 different messages. These banners were rotated between the following municipal facilities:
  - Municipal Administrative Centre,
  - Bowmanville Library Branch,
  - Garnet B. Rickard,
  - South Courtice Arena,
  - Courtice Community Complex,
  - Courtice Library Branch,
  - Newcastle Library Branch,
  - Diane Hamre Recreation Centre,
  - Orono Library Branch, and
  - Bowmanville Indoor Soccer.

- Portal Banners were taken to community events that Clerk's Division Staff attended, including the:
  - Clarington Farmers Market,
  - Newcastle Harvest Festival and
  - Apple Festival and Craft Sale.
- Portable Banners were taken to the Special Voting Locations.
- 5 Arena (rink) Boards were placed in each ice pad:
  - Garnet B. Rickard x 2
  - South Courtice Arena x 2
  - Darlington Sports Centre
- Electronic (Scala TV screens) Signs
  - 3 messages were created and displayed at different times (total time was from July 1 to October 24) on the TV screens within municipal facilities.
- Park / Road Billboards were placed at 4 locations from August 25 to October 25 (picture within Attachment 1):
  - Garnet B. Rickard on Bowmanville Avenue
  - Courtice, Highway 2 and Trulls Road Parkette
  - Newcastle – Highway 2 at the Library
  - Orono – Mill Street South
- Bus shelter advertisements were placed in 3 bus shelters from September 12 to October 24 at (picture within Attachment 1):
  - the Courtice Parkette / Highway 2 Westbound,
  - Bowmanville – Highway 2 Eastbound, and
  - the Newcastle Library.
- Election Assistance Centres all had roadside signs.

- An election hotline shortcut was created for Clarington's automated telephone system.
- Magnet Vehicle Signs were placed on 41 municipal vehicles.
- Postcards and election-branded flying discs and pens were handed out at every event the Clerk's Division Staff attended.
- Posters were placed in community hall boards, municipal facilities, community centres and libraries.
- All outgoing mail had the Election logo and website on the envelope.
  - This began following the Provincial Election in June.
- Election information was provided to long-term care homes in Clarington for inclusion in their newsletters.
- Radio Advertisements
  - CKDO (107.7 FM, 1580 AM) – has 42,000 listeners tune in weekly and 63.9% of those listeners are aged between 55 and 74.

20 commercials between August 8 to August 12, advising voters to get ready to vote online or by telephone and to check if they are on the Voters' List.

10 commercials between October 18 to October 22, advising voters that the voting period was now open.
  - 94.9 The Rock – has 121,900 listeners tune in weekly and 53% of those listeners are aged between 35 and 54.

20 commercials between August 8 to August 12, advising voters to get ready to vote online or by telephone and to check if they are on the Voters' List.

10 commercials between October 18 to October 22, advising voters that the voting period was now open.



- KX96 – has 184,800 listeners tune in weekly and 27% of those listeners are aged between 25 and 34.

20 commercials between August 8 to August 12, advising voters to get ready to vote online or by telephone and to check if they are on the Voters' List.

10 commercials between October 18 to October 22, advising voters that the voting period was now open.

- Advertisements on Rogers TV in collaboration with Durham Region and the Durham municipalities (September 11 to October 23):
  - TV commercial – 15 seconds
  - Web commercial – 30 seconds
- Created a dedicated website at [Clarington.net/votes](http://Clarington.net/votes), which housed all the election information, including Candidate information.
- Clarington Website banners:
  - 5 website alert banners were displayed at the top of the Clarington website. Banners were changed depending on the information being promoted at that time.
  - Homepage banners (5 key messages throughout the election period).
  - 6 news items were sent to subscribers regarding the municipal election information from the Region of Durham.
- Social Media – 106 messages between March 1 and October 31, 2022
  - Facebook – 60 posts (8 paid Facebook advertisements targeted to people 18+ located in Clarington)
  - Twitter – 44 posts
  - LinkedIn – 2 posts
- Participation in Durham Region's Smart Home Device initiative – communications about municipal elections could be obtained through a smart home device.
- Clarington Staff corporate email signatures included Election information and the Election logo – beginning in early July

- Booths at Community Events – Clerk's Division Staff attended the:
    - Clarington Farmers' Market on four separate weekends,
    - Newcastle Harvest Festival, and
    - Apple Festival and Craft Sale
  - A Candidate Information Session was held in August, which was advertised Durham wide.
  - Clarington held an internet / telephone voting demonstration night with Clarington's vendor Simply Voting on June 8, 2022.
  - Revision Days were held at each of the Special Voting Locations, along with one at Wilmot Creek and the Older Adults Fall lunch at the Courtice Community Complex.
  - Mock Elections were held at the:
    - Beech Centre during a Bowmanville Older Adults Association lunch,
    - Courtice Community Complex during an Older Adults lunch, and
    - Wheelhouse at Wilmot Creek.
- 2.7 Further to the communications activities described above, everyone on the Voters' List was sent a Voter Information Letter through the mail, which included information on how to vote, how to get assistance and the list of Election Assistance Centres.
- 2.8 A dedicated election phone line and email were also established and was available for extended hours during the voting period.

## **Survey Results**

- 2.9 Clarington's Election Team also conducted a survey (available online and in paper form at the EACs) to gauge the voter experience with the internet / telephone voting system. Lots of feedback was received that was very positive.
- 2.10 2,859 people responded to the survey with 2,850 responding that they voted online, 3 responded via telephone and 6 responded that they didn't vote.
- 2.11 85% of respondents liked how easy, fast, and convenient the voting process was, with 5% responding that they didn't like anything about the process.

- 2.12 82% of respondents stated that they did not receive any assistance during the voting process, 8% responding that they received the information they needed from the Clarington Elections website.
- 2.13 80% of respondents heard about the Clarington online election via the Voter Information Letter.
- 2.14 84% of respondents stated that they are very likely to vote online or by telephone in future elections, with 4% responding that they are very unlikely.
- 2.15 The final question asked if respondents had any other comments, or concerns, about the voting process. These comments varied wildly from people requesting a paper ballot, not trusting online voting or concerned about the security and privacy of online voting, to people expressing how much they loved it, how easy it was and requesting that online voting be an option in every election.
- 2.16 Some comments expressed concerns about the ability for senior citizens to vote. At the Election Assistance Centres, some senior citizens came in a little nervous, having not participated in online voting before, but almost every one left expressing how easy the system was. Election Officials also attended Special Voting Locations where senior citizens live and an EAC was also setup at Wilmot Creek. One senior citizen commented that “it was just like signing up for a recreation program.”
- 2.17 There were also comments that advertising and promotion was not sufficient and people had no idea you could vote online. With the number and varying methods of advertising that was undertaken (as described in section 2.6 above), the election team is unsure of what other advertising that could have been done.
- 2.18 Some commented that they would like to be able to vote in person, but the EACs were available, and setup, for people to vote in person.
- 2.19 Some respondents described their specific circumstances related to the accessibility of the voting process. Here is a sample:
- “Soooo thankful for this opportunity online!!!! Had planned to vote in person – but unexpected demands filled my day. Couldn’t have done it any other way and would have been sooo disappointed as I believe in my right/duty to vote. Thank you!”
  - “Thank you. This service is fantastic and much appreciated as I am elderly and have mobility issues.”
  - “I am a senior with mobility issues and this made it so much easier for me.”

- “Thank you for moving this online. As a mom who works full time and had a sick toddler and was sick myself on voting day, I’m sure I wouldn’t have made it in person to vote. This allowed me to vote online and double check my research on candidates before casting a vote. I loved it! Thanks for making this happen.”
- “I prefer to vote in person, because it is nice to see other members of the community at our rural community centre. I also like to bring my children (one who is now old enough to vote himself) to create a sense of excitement about voting. However, due to a family hospitalization, I was glad to have the option to vote online today. In future though, I will resume voting in person.”
- “This was very easy for a mom with a new baby and toddler, I was able to vote and not worry about figuring out how to corral my children to wait in line with Mom so she could participate in the election.”
- “Voting was so easy, I have a computer and iPad. I keep up with the technology even though I’m a senior. Love to learn keeps my brain functioning. Keep up this good work online, as I cannot walk as good as I used to.”
- “This was a great addition to the voting process. I really appreciated being able to vote online and also my 90-year mother was able to participate with the help of a family member to log her into the site. Without this ability, it would have been very difficult getting her out to the voting location due to covid and her medical issues. Awesome job Clarington!”
- “My husband is disabled, and it was so much easier to voter this way. Not having to drive there, get him in his wheelchair, hope it is accessible! and deal with bad weather is much easier and I wish we could vote this way always! Also being older and having other physical problems is also sometimes difficult to get out.”
- “I am a senior citizen (age 70) and this process was one of the easiest websites I had to maneuver through. A super great idea to continue this way of voting.”
- “As someone who is housebound due to medical disability this was wonderful.”
- “Online voting is fantastic! Thank you, Clarington!!! I hope it encourages more votes being cast – it can’t get any more convenient and accessible than this. I am disabled and so grateful for truly barrier-free voting.”

### **3. Financial Consideration**

Not Applicable.

### **4. Concurrence**

Not Applicable.

### **5. Conclusion**

We are confident that the accessibility initiatives undertaken by the Clerk's Division for Clarington's 2022 Municipal Elections met, and exceeded, the needs within our community. Staff will continue to monitor the technologies and processes of conducting elections and will continue to receive feedback from our voters, to ensure that our 2026 Municipal Elections process will ensure dignity, integration, independence, and fairness, and provide an equal opportunity for all of Clarington's voters.

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Staff Contact: John Paul Newman, Deputy Clerk, 905-623-3379 ext. 2103 or  
jnewman@clarington.net.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Various Advertisements

Attachment 2 – 2022 Final Tax Bill Insert – Page 1

Interested Parties:

The following interested parties will be notified of Council's decision:

Clarington Accessibility Advisory Committee

## Attachment 1 to Report LGS-004-23

### Various Advertisements

#### Metroland Takeover

The image is a screenshot of a website takeover for the Municipality of Clarington. The layout includes a top banner with the 'Clarington Votes' logo and the text 'Vote online or by telephone until October 24.' with the URL 'www.clarington.net/votes'. Below this is a navigation bar with links to 'save.ca', 'homefinder.ca', 'wheels.ca', and 'Readers' Choice Awards', along with a 'Sign In' button. The main content area features a 'VOTE NOW!' section with the same URL and a 'DurhamRegion.com' logo. A navigation menu lists categories: LOCAL NEWS, THINGS TO DO, OPINION, LIFE, ANNOUNCEMENTS, and MARKETPLACE. Below the menu, a 'LOCAL NEWS' section displays a headline 'MISSING Oshawa man found safe' with a sub-headline 'Man went missing Oct. 14'. A large red 'FOUND' stamp is overlaid on the headline. To the right of the headline, it says 'OPEN DIGITAL ACCESS 10:00 AM'. The takeover is decorated with illustrations of hands holding devices displaying the 'VOTE' interface.

**Clarington Votes**  
Vote online or by telephone until October 24.  
[www.clarington.net/votes](http://www.clarington.net/votes)

save.ca homefinder.ca wheels.ca Readers' Choice Awards Sign In

**VOTE NOW!**  
[www.clarington.net/votes](http://www.clarington.net/votes) 6°C | Wednesday Oct 19

**DurhamRegion.com**

LOCAL NEWS THINGS TO DO OPINION LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS MARKETPLACE

BUSINESS CRIME COUNCIL MUNICIPAL ELECTION COMMUNITY VOICES CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

View stories from Ajax Clarington Oshawa Pickering Scugog Uxbridge Whitby Brock Township Readers' Choice Awards

**LOCAL NEWS**

**MISSING Oshawa man found safe**  
Man went missing Oct. 14

OPEN DIGITAL ACCESS 10:00 AM

**FOUND**

**Clarington Votes**  
Vote online or by telephone until October 24.  
[www.clarington.net/votes](http://www.clarington.net/votes)

Bus Shelter Advertisement





On-street Billboards

