The Corporation of the Municipality of Wawa
Staff Report

Clerk

Prepared For: Council	**Report No.: CC-2022-05**
Agenda Date: April 4, 2023	**File No.: C11**

Subject

The Municipality of Wawa respects the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities. The Municipality is committed to promote a barrier-free and inclusive community in making the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election accessible by working to accommodate the needs of the electors by removing barriers to vote for persons with disabilities.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the accessibility of the electoral services offered to all electors and candidates in the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. This report outlines the initiatives undertaken during the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and how these actions impacted their voting experience.

List of Stakeholders

The list of Stakeholders includes:

- Electorate, Municipality of Wawa
- Mayor and Council

Summary of Recommendation

RESOLVED THAT Council of the Municipality of Wawa hereby:

1. Receive the Clerk's Report on the 2022 Post-Election Accessibility Report.

Respectfully Submitted By: **Cathy Cyr** **Clerk**	**Reviewed By:** **Maury O'Neill** **CAO-Treasurer**
Name/Signature/Title Cathy Cyr	**Supervisor's Name/Signature/Title** Maury O'Neill

Background

The Municipality of Wawa is committed to eliminating barriers and improving access for persons with disabilities by providing its citizens with an inclusive accessible community through its passage and adoption of strategies and policies that promote dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all citizens.

Under the Municipal Election Act, 1996, the Clerk is legislatively responsible for conducting the Municipal and School Board Elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to participate fully in the election. The Act required the Clerk to have regards to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and to ensure that all voting places are accessible to electors with disabilities. The Clerk is also required, within 90 days after a regular election, to prepare a report on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the report accessible to the public.

In preparation for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election, staff reviewed the relevant legislation and implemented initiatives to ensure compliance. The Clerk prepared an Accessibility Plan for 2022 and it addressed identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and made the plan available to the public prior to Election Day by posting it on the Municipal Website.

Strategy and Action Taken for the Identification, Removal and Prevention of Barriers

1. Method of Voting – Electronic and Telephone Voting

On March 15, 2022, through the passage of By-Law No. 3480-22, Council approved an alternative method of voting for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. Council determined that electronic and telephone voting would be utilized as the method of voting for the second time. Council utilized Internet and Telephone Voting in its 2018 Election as well.

The Election was conducted over a fourteen-day voting period (October 11 – 24, 2022) as a vote-anywhere, vote-anytime, paperless election. Voters were not required to mail back a vote-by-mail kit as in previous elections (prior to 2018), and instead could vote at the municipal office, deemed a Voter Help Centre during hours of operation or remotely by touch-tone telephone or online 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world using a smartphone, tablet or laptop. Such provisions supported increased accessibility, convenience and sustainability throughout the voting process.

Moreover, Electronic voting provided the electors with the ability to mark their ballot from home at their convenience. This allowed increased rights of privacy to electors with disabilities whom may find voting at a traditional paper-based voting location more difficult or need assistance with mailing a vote-by-mail kit. This format gives the ability to vote with little or no assistance required from others.

The Clerk's Department worked closely with the contracted electronic voting system service provider, Intelivote Systems Inc., to evaluate the system and ensure that it was fully secure, keeps its servers in Canada to satisfy legal requirements by Canadian election officials, which stipulates the vote must be kept secret and is accessible for persons with disabilities. Electors with disabilities could use their personal assistive technologies to interact with the electronic voting system anywhere and a demo of the electronic voting system was available on the Municipality's website.

2. Election Officials

Leading up to the election, an Election Accessibility Plan was developed. The 2022 Accessibility Plan guides the provision of election related services to persons with disabilities. The Plan was designed to respect the dignity and independence of electors and candidates, and ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

Election Officials participated in a hands-on voting location simulation where they rotated scenarios acting in the various Election Day roles, including Revision Clerks and Helpers. This was extremely beneficial as it demonstrated to Election Officials how and when to offer assistance to voters at each stage of the voting process. Scenario-based training also allowed Election Officials to practice scenarios specific to persons with disabilities, including voters in a wheelchair or bringing a service animal or a support person to a voting location as well as voters having visual and mobility disabilities and requiring assistance in reading and signing oaths.

All Election Officials were Municipality of Wawa employees and had previously received formal accessibility training, which includes training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This formal accessibility training outlined the customer service standard and how to serve persons with disabilities.

3. In-Person Method of Voting with or Without Voting Assistance

For those voters without means to access touch-tone telephone or online voting opportunities, or those who sought assistance from trained election officials, a 14-day voting place location at the municipal office was available to provide access to laptops, an iPad, internet connectivity and election staff. Further,

various Voter Help Stations were set-up at various locations throughout the community and specific dates as follows:

Location	Date	Time
Hillcrest Heights 40 Hillcrest Heights	Wednesday, October 12, 2022	10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Wawa Goose Seniors Club 63 Broadway Avenue	Thursday, October 13, 2022	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Lady Dunn Health Centre 17 Government Road	Saturday, October 15, 2022	9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Mountain View Apartments 35 Algoma Street	Saturday, October 15, 2022	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
New Wawa Senior Complex 37 Algoma Street	Wednesday, October 19, 2022	9:00 am to 11:00 am
MMCC Lobby – 3 Chris Simon Drive	Wednesday, October 19, 2022	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Town Hall – Municipal Office 40 Broadway Avenue	**Monday to Friday ONLY** Tuesday, October 11, 2022 to Friday, October 21, 2022	8:30 am to 4:30 pm

The 2022 Municipal and School Board Election ensured that accessibility was a primary consideration in choosing where voters could cast their electronic ballot. This was critical to ensure that the Municipal office building had a barrier-free path of travel, with no obstructions to the entrances, designated barrier-free parking spaces at grade, and access to Election Officials at the main entrance. There was adequate lighting and signage was posted to inform electors of the Voter Help Centre location. Election Officials made electors aware of the availability of assistance for persons requiring same at the dedicated voting booths. Election Officials were positioned to greet electors as they came in to the Municipal Office during the voting period and into the Community Centre on Election Day, and assist them as may be necessary.

During the entire voting period, personal assistive devices were permitted at the Voter Help Centre, such as wheelchairs and walkers. Support persons and service animals were welcomed and assistance was offered to voters at every stage of the voting process, including being greeted at the door, making any necessary amendments to their information on the Voters' List, and casting their electronic ballot. Election Officials treated all voters with dignity and respect, being sensitive to the individual needs of voters and recognizing that some required unique attention. While forms and oaths were able to be printed in large font, a magnifier was also present to assist voters with low vision and Election Officials could read and sign oaths upon voters' requests. Numerous chairs were available for voters to sit at if they had to wait. It is important to also note that there was a mix of laptops with a mouse and a touch screen iPad at the Voter Help Centre in an effort to offer various accessible technologies to voters. Touch screen stylus pens were available for electors requiring assistance with tapping the screen of the touchscreen laptop or iPad.

Opportunities for Improvement:

• Set up voter help centre location with greater space between voting stations and privacy screens.
• Ensure that Election Officials, have sufficient space to provide assistance at their table (i.e. perhaps provide an accordion folder for all relevant forms for each officer) leaving more table space clear.
• Election Officials recommended having a visible identifier (name tag) for election staff; perhaps t-shirts or lanyards.
• Utilize more touch screen kiosks for future elections; they were well- received by older adults and those who were not comfortable using laptop computers, as they are similar to bank machines.
• Reduce the amount of 'captchas' (common web technique used to help ensure that your respondents are real humans and not a program written to spam your survey) required on the iPads that were in kiosk-mode, as there were too many security questions and most electors found it difficult and cumbersome to get through them.

4. Internet Method of Voting

Eligible voters were provided with the opportunity to vote online using a number of personal devices, including but not limited to tablets, computers and smart phones alongside any accompanying assistive devices or software required. Such methods supported independent, private and convenient voting anytime throughout the 14-day voting period and eliminated the need to visit the Voter Help Centre location in person to vote. This is an added benefit to those with mobility impairments. Intelivote System Inc. provided a service compliant with World Wide Web Consortium website principles (organization, functionality, readability and alternative ways of representing information). The system was also created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 Level A) so that persons with disabilities could perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting system.

Opportunities for Improvement:

• Several voters who called in on the Voter Helpline identified minor confusion related to accessing the voter website. Once clarified by the Election Official that the issue was with the browser on their device or computer and not with the voting website address itself, they were sent the link to the website or were directed to the municipal website where a link was placed to the voting website. The voter information letter did instruct electors to access the voting website via Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, etc.
• After completion of entering the PIN, a notification screen advising the elector that the voting session will be secure was suggested for the future.
• In regards to the School Board Trustee race, an acclamation message was provided to voters after they clicked on the School Board Trustee race. Some

found it confusing as they then had to tap or click on the 'go back' button after they read the message. Consideration will be given in the next election whether we can provide that message on the home screen so voters can simply read the message with less tapping and/or clicking with the mouse.
• A completion screen was also requested for future, to know when one's online voting session is complete.

5. Telephone Method of Voting

Persons with disabilities and those who did not wish to use internet voting options, were able to access electronic voting over the telephone. Intelivote Systems Inc. created a telephone voting service that was offered on all types of touchtone phones and wireless devices. The service used clear, English language and menu options were presented in an organized and easy-to-follow order, advising voters when to select options and provide confirmation of one's selections. Standard volume levels were used to allow for adjustments depending on the user and device.

Opportunities for Improvement:

• Several voters who called in on the Voter Helpline identified confusion related to the format in which one must enter their next selection (two-digit number) for the Councillor race following their first selection in succession before finalizing their ballot with the # sign key. The # sign key "submits their ballot" when they should have continued to select their next two-digit number corresponding to the next Councillor they wanted to choose.
• Perhaps starting with the Councillor race first for the telephone system, followed by the Mayor race would remove the voter's tendency to press the # key in error after making only one selection.

6. Communications

The Municipality of Wawa considered accessibility in all information and communication strategies for the 202 Municipal and School Board Election. Upon requests from persons with disabilities, Elections staff were prepared to provide copies of election documents, or the information contained in the document, in a format that took into account the person's disability. Specific to candidates, Intelivote's Candidate Access Portal granted candidates the ability to access the Voters' List electronically throughout each day of the voting period. This prevented candidates from having to physically attend to obtain their copies of the Voters' List.

The Municipality's election website was designed to be both informative and accessible. All information for voters, candidates, and third parties was placed in distinct sections on the website and they were directed to access all documents and forms through the website in an effort to promote accessibility and

transparency. The information available online used clear and simple language and was continuously updated to reflect the most recent election developments and information.
Election information was communicated through various channels and alternate formats including emails, social media, and radio. Voter Information Letters were mailed out to all eligible electors on the Voters' List For election related inquiries or feedback, all residents were able to contact the Clerk's Department directly via telephone or through a designated email. Live assistance from Election staff was provided during office hours. This provided another means of information for those who did not access the election website. The Clerk will continue to receive feedback through the election email address.

In the event of disruptions to electoral services or unforeseen circumstances that affected the accessibility of voting locations, a process was in place to facilitate notification. For example, if the Clerk needed to declare an emergency, information regarding the extension of voting hours and voting locations would be updated in real-time on social media, the Municipality's election section of the website, posted on the front window of the municipal office, broadcast to the local radio stations and communicated to all Election Officials present at the voting location.

Opportunities for Improvement:

• Include notation relative to "availability of alternative formats on request" on Voter Information Letter.
• Provide the telephone code for each candidate on Voter Information Letter.
• State clearly the three methods of voting instead of the word 'electronic' on Voter Information Letter.

Device	Operating System	Voter Sessions	%
Computer	Linux	7	67.4%
	Macintosh	102	
	Windows 7	11	
	Windows 8	2	
	Windows 10	340	
Smart Phone	Android	88	32.6%
	iPhone	95	
Tablet	iPad	38	
Other	iPod Touch	2	
Total		685	

Financial Impact

No financial impact.

Conclusion

It was the goal of the Municipality of Wawa Clerk's Department to ensure that electors within the Municipality who required accessibility services were provided with the best opportunity to vote as independently as possible in the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. Election staff also strived to make the nomination and registration process as accessible as possible for candidates.

The 2022 Municipal and School Board Election total voter turnout was 37.4% (2018 voter turnout was 39.8%) which exceeded the provincial average of 36.3%. Remarkably, the highest voter turnout by age group was the 70's age group with a voter turnout of 52.4%.

Age Breakdown of Who Voted					
Age	ELIG.	VOTED	INTERNET	PHONE	% Part.
18-19	19	5	5	0	26.3%
20s	162	33	33	0	20.4%
30s	321	72	69	3	22.4%
40s	267	82	77	5	30.7%
50s	396	150	140	10	37.9%
60s	462	222	184	38	48.1%
70s	286	150	131	19	52.4%
80s	107	48	38	10	44.9%
90s	22	11	8	3	50.0%
UK*	25	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	2,067	773	685	88	37.4%

The Municipality of Wawa Clerk's Department will continue to learn, develop, and adjust our approaches in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Debriefs have been conducted with all Election Officials and both resident and staff/council feedback regarding the accessibility of the election will be considered by the Clerk's Department in preparation for the next Municipal and School Board Election.

Feedback

Public feedback about the manner in which election services were provided to persons with accessible needs may be submitted to the Municipal Clerk through a variety of methods:

- Telephone: 705-856-2244 ext. 221
- Email: slord@wawa.cc or moneill@wawa.cc
- In person: 40 Broadway Avenue, Wawa, ON
- Mail: PO Box 500, 40 Broadway Avenue, Wawa, ON P0S 1K0

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services.

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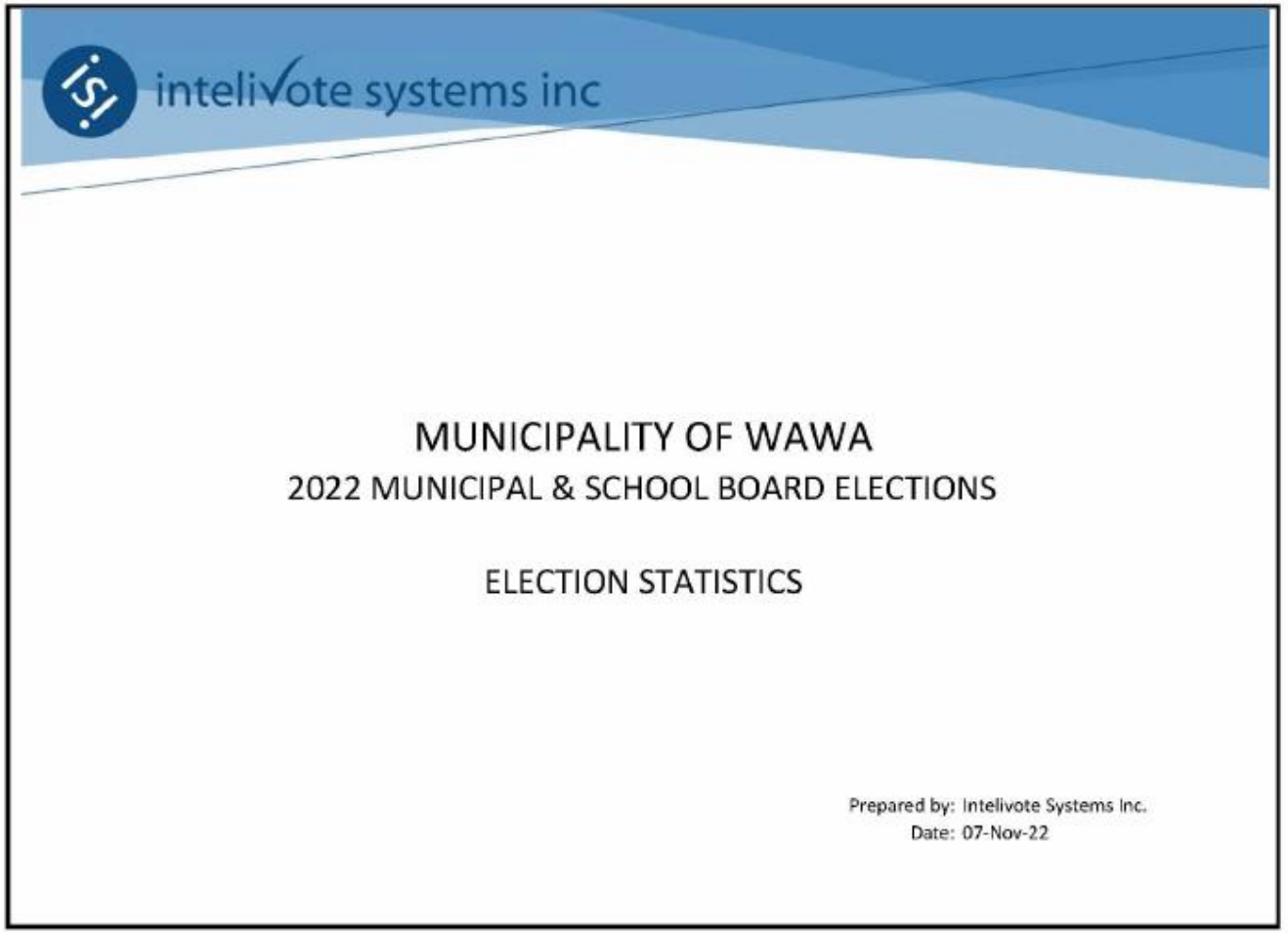

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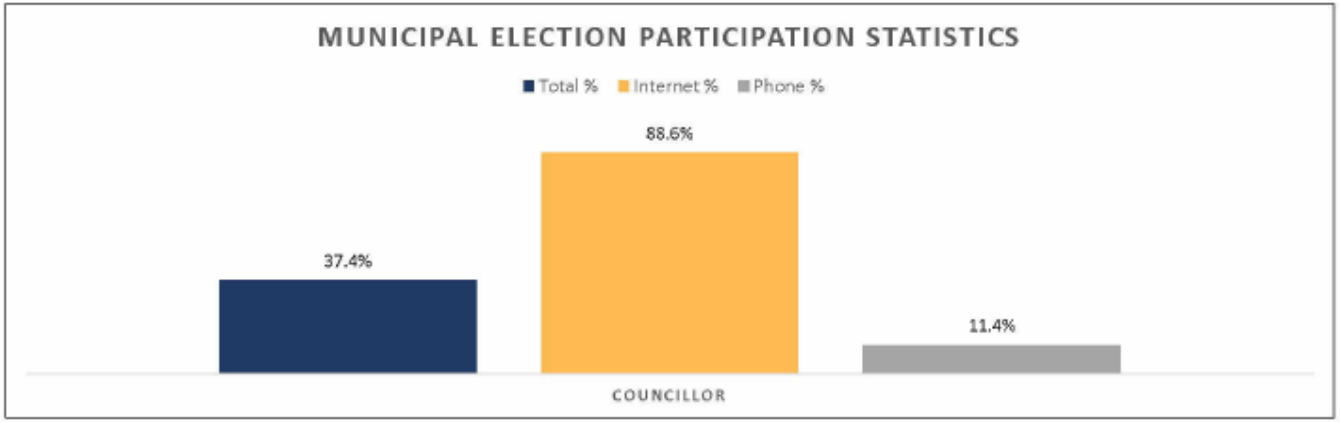
2022 MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA
Municipal and School Board Elections
Participation Statistics

		Total Eligible Electors	Participated Eligible Electors	Total %	Internet Votes	Internet %	Phone Votes	Phone %
1	Election Overall	2,067	773	37.4%	685	88.6%	88	11.4%

		RACE	Total Eligible Electors	Participated Eligible Electors	Total %	Internet Votes	Internet %	Phone Votes	Phone %	Spoiled Ballots	Spoil %	Declined Ballots	Declined %
MUN	2	Mayor - ACCLAIMED	2,067										
MUN	3	Councillor	2,067	773	37.4%	685	88.6%	88	11.4%	1	0.1%	3	0.4%
SCHOOL	4	English Public (Accl)	1,528										
SCHOOL	5	English Separate (Accl)	225										
SCHOOL	6	French Public (Accl)	30										
SCHOOL	7	French Separate (Accl)	255										
SCHOOL	8	No School Support	29										



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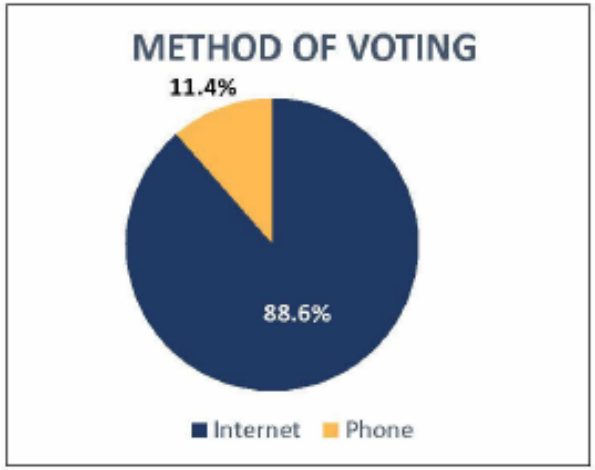
2022 MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA
Municipal and School Board Elections
Election Statistics

	Information Base	Number	%
1	Number of eligible electors in system.	2,067	
2	Number of electors who cast at least one ballot.	773	
3	Participation rate.	**37.4%**	
4	Voters who used the internet to vote.	685	88.6%
5	Voters who used the phone to vote.	88	11.4%
6	Internet votes cast at a kiosk (incluced in line 4)	0	0.0%
7	Average amount of time a voter spent voting using the Internet.	1min 18 sec	
8	Average amount of time a voter spent voting using the telephone.	2min 02 sec	
	Residency Status	**Number**	**%**
9	Total eligible electors with "Resident" status.	1,916	92.7%
10	Voters casting ballots with "Resident" status.	759	98.2%
11	Total eligible electors with "Non-Resident" status.	151	7.3%
12	Voters casting ballots with "Non-Resident" status.	14	1.8%
	Occupancy Status	**Number**	**%**
13	Total eligible electors with "Owner" status.	1,444	69.9%
14	Voters casting ballots with "Owner" status.	577	74.6%
15	Total eligible electors with "Spouse" status.	92	4.5%
16	Voters casting ballots with "Spouse" status.	47	6.1%
17	Total eligible electors with "Tenant" status.	335	16.2%
18	Voters casting ballots with "Tenant" status.	111	14.4%
19	Total eligible electors with "Boarder/Other" status.	196	9.5%
20	Voters casting ballots with "Boarder/Other" status.	38	4.9%



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2022 MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA
Municipal and School Board Elections
Voting Time Breakdown

Date & Time	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct	15-Oct	16-Oct	17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	22-Oct	23-Oct	24-Oct	Grand Total	%/Hr.
12:00 AM		2			1									1	**4**	0.5%
1:00 AM															**0**	0.0%
2:00 AM								1							**1**	0.1%
3:00 AM															**0**	0.0%
4:00 AM															**0**	0.0%
5:00 AM										1					**1**	0.1%
6:00 AM		1	1						2		1		1		**6**	0.8%
7:00 AM		3		1	1							4	1	3	**13**	1.7%
8:00 AM		5	1	2		2	2	3	3	2	1	2	1	6	**30**	3.9%
9:00 AM		5	2	3	4	2	4	2	4	2	3	1	5	8	**45**	5.8%
10:00 AM	16	6	6	5	5	6	1	6	11	1	2		3	12	**80**	10.3%
11:00 AM	6	7	3	7		4	5	3	1	5	2	4	2	12	**61**	7.9%
12:00 PM	11	8	8	3	1	3	3	3	4		3	1		18	**66**	8.5%
1:00 PM	7	5	14	3	1	1	1	2	7	3	2			22	**68**	8.8%
2:00 PM	4	13	9	4			3	3	1	2	4		4	19	**66**	8.5%
3:00 PM	2	6	3	1	7	3	5	5	1	6	2	3	2	11	**57**	7.4%
4:00 PM	3	15	2	5	3	3	4	3	2	3	1	2	1	9	**56**	7.2%
5:00 PM	2	6	3	1	4	3	4	2	5	4	3	2	1	13	**53**	6.9%
6:00 PM	11	10	7	1		4	6	1	1	2	2	3	7	19	**74**	9.6%
7:00 PM	5	4	3			3	4	1	3	3			2	19	**47**	6.1%
8:00 PM	4	2		1		3	2	1	1		1	2	5		**22**	2.8%
9:00 PM		1				2		1				2	7		**13**	1.7%
10:00 PM			1					1		1		1	2		**6**	0.8%
11:00 PM			1							1			2		**4**	0.5%
Grand Total	**71**	**99**	**64**	**37**	**27**	**39**	**44**	**38**	**46**	**36**	**27**	**27**	**46**	**172**	**773**	100.0%
%/Day	9.2%	12.8%	8.3%	4.8%	3.5%	5.0%	5.7%	4.9%	6.0%	4.7%	3.5%	3.5%	6.0%	22.3%	100.0%	

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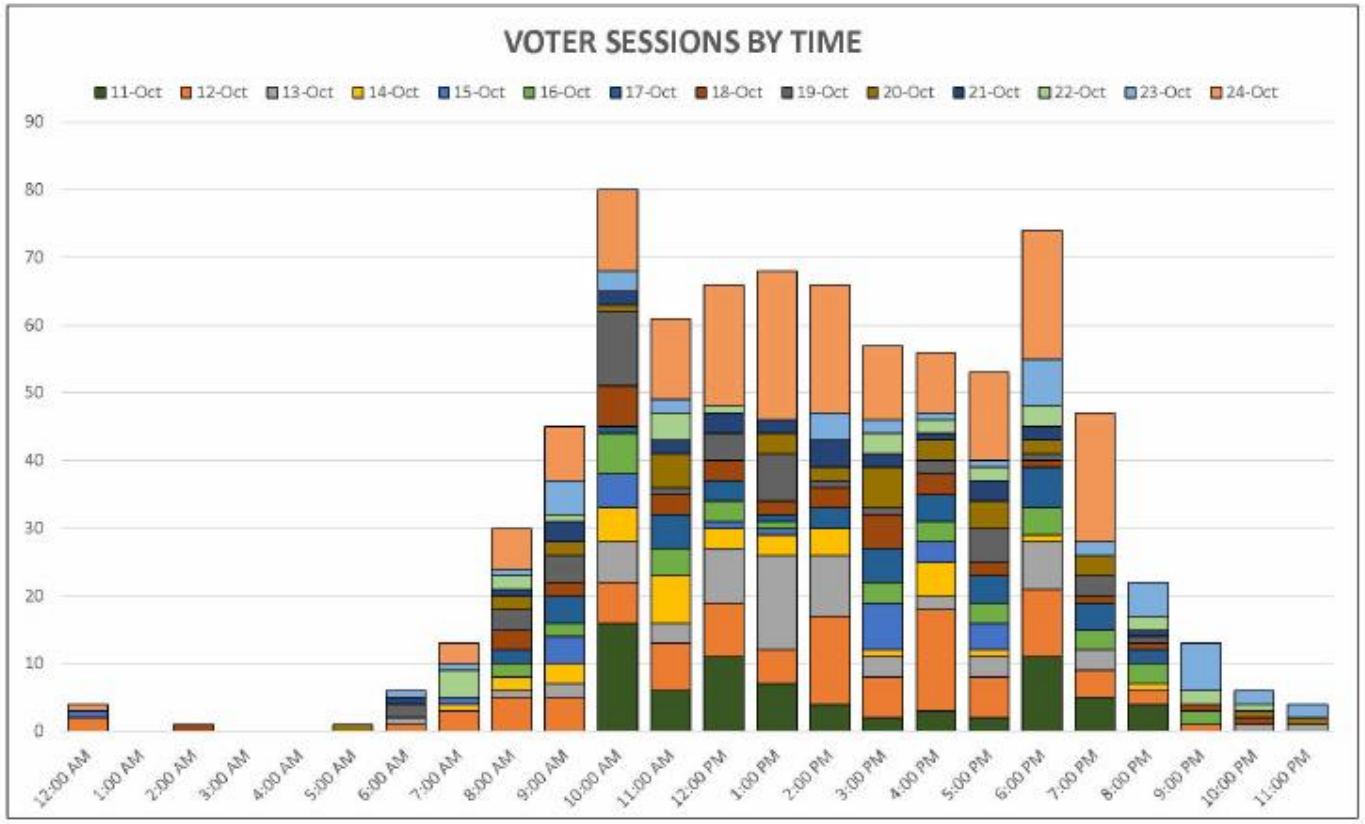
2022 MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA
Municipal and School Board Elections
Voting Time Breakdown



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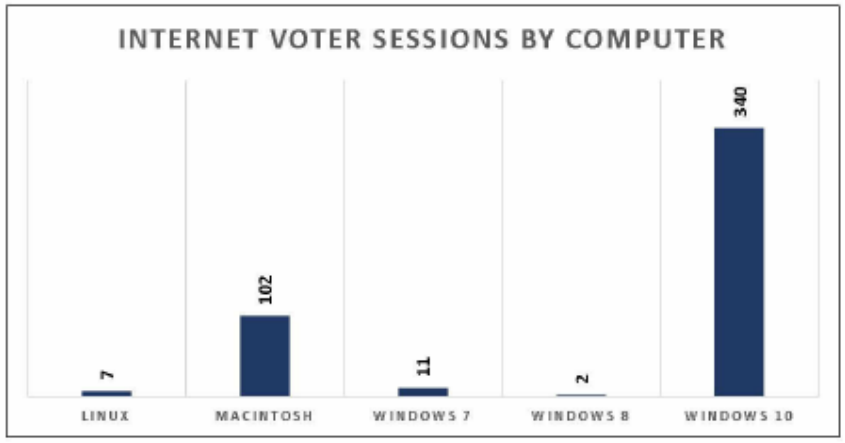
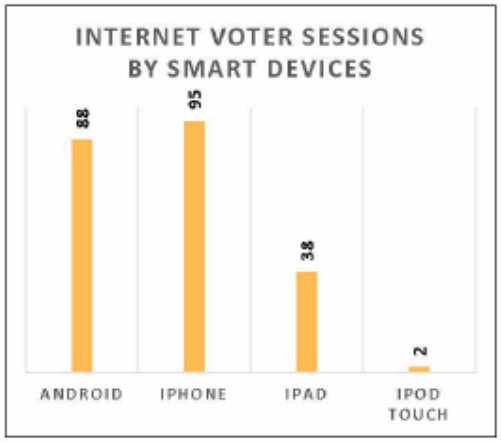
2022 MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA
Municipal and School Board Elections
Internet Voter Sessions

Device	Operating System	Voter Sessions	%
Computer	Linux	7	67.4%
	Macintosh	102	
	Windows 7	11	
	Windows 8	2	
	Windows 10	340	
Smart Phone	Android	88	32.6%
	iPhone	95	
Tablet	iPad	38	
Other	iPod Touch	2	
Total		685	





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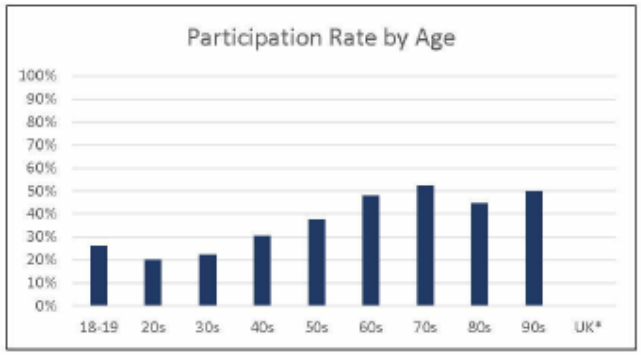
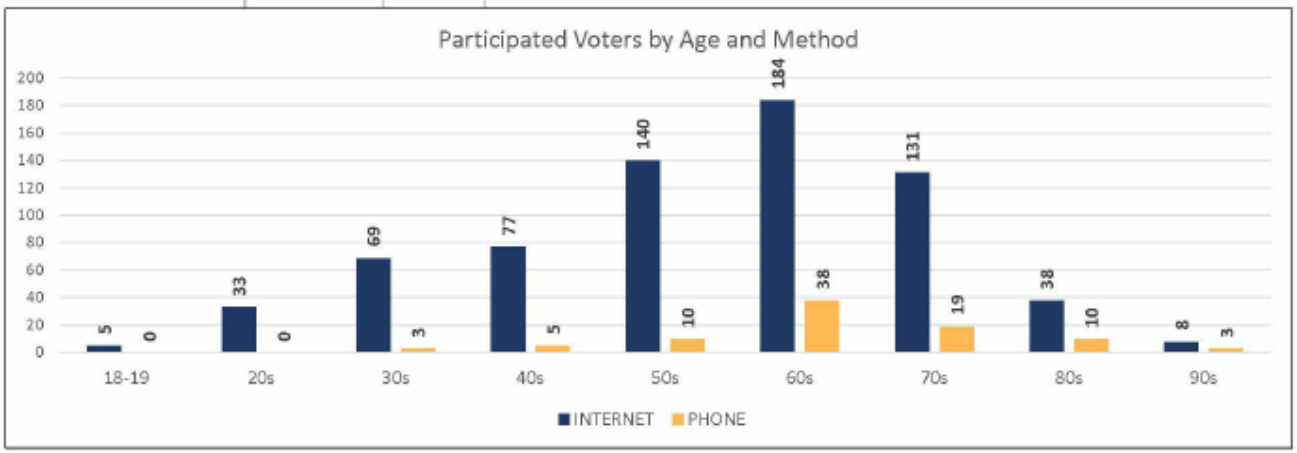
2022 MUNICIPALITY OF WAWA
Municipal and School Board Elections
Age Statistics

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