

Horton Township



2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

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INTRODUCTION

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election in the Township of Horton.

The following excerpts from the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, SCHEd 32, define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities:

Number and Location of Voting Places

45 (1) The clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c. 32, Sched., 45 (1).

Accessibility

(2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (23).

Electors and candidates with disabilities

12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (8).

Plan Re: Barriers

(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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Report

(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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Variations for electors with visual impairments

41 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996, c. 32,

Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).

Assistance – The deputy returning officer may permit an elector who needs assistance in voting to have such assistance as the deputy returning officer considers necessary. See M.E. s. 52 (1), par.4.

OBJECTIVES

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Township will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That all voting locations are accessible;
- That persons with disabilities can independently cast their vote and verify their selection;
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate, or election official;
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, media launches, the Township's website, and social media (Facebook).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

This plan is an active document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

During the development process of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps were implemented:

1. Staff training standards and practices related to the Election were established to ensure that people with disabilities can vote in a positive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voter's needs are to be accommodated whenever possible; and

2. Following the Election, a report will be prepared on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

VOTING LOCATION

Accessible Route

An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area will be identified with clear and understandable signage.

Parking

Designated parking for electors with disabilities is to be provided in proximity to the entrance of the Voting Location where possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked and will be on firm and level ground. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

Entrance/Exit to the Voting Location

All entrances to the Voting Location will be easy to access and barrier free. Every effort will be made to ensure that the door into the interior Voting Area is wide enough for a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to pass through safely and easily. Should doors into the interior Voting Area not be accessible the doors shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the day.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior Voting Area will be level and easily navigated. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit, and seating will be made available.

Support Persons

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, an Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector with the disability, determine the extent to which he/she needs assistance

and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may be marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability.

Assistive Personal Equipment

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

Service Animals

An animal is a Service Animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, for example, a guide dog wearing a harness. Service Animals will be permitted in voting places.

Vision Loss

Each Voting Place will be equipped with magnifying sheets to assist an individual with low vision.

Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss

Each Voting Place will be equipped with a pad of paper and pen to communicate with the hearing impaired if required.

For the 2022 Municipal Election, the following institution location has been identified:

Township of Horton Municipal Office
2253 Johnston Rd. Renfrew, ON. K7V 3Z8

ASSISTANCE TO CANDIDATES

Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Places and other designated election locations.

Campaign Expenses

Expenses related to an individual's disability which would not have been incurred if not for the election, are not subject to the spending limit if they are incurred by a candidate or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability.

VOTING METHODS

The Township will be using a composite paper ballot where on which electors choose their preferred candidate(s) by placing a mark, with a pen or pencil in the circle next to the name of the chosen candidate(s).

An elector with a disability can also choose to have a person assist them behind the voting screen.

Should an elector with a disability not be able to enter a Polling Location, Election Officials are able to attend with a ballot and ballot box outside of the Polling Location in the parking lot.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Township is required, as per the Accessible Customer Service Standard, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that considers the person's disability.

Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address the specific needs of a user. The Township and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Township or is supplied by a third party, the Township will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or will attempt to assist the elector by providing assistive equipment.

General Election Material

Large Print – printed material generated by the Township will be provided in an Arial font, minimum 12 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – information generated by the Township on the website regarding the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A and allow for assistive software to be utilized. In addition, website font can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary accessible service disruption, Election Officials will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, the Township will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for electors with disabilities at the Voting Location.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of Voting Locations during the advance vote or on the final voting day, Notices of Disruption will be posted in real time:

- on the Township's website;
- on the Township's Facebook page;
- posted at the site of disruption; and
- at the Township Municipal Office

FEEDBACK

The Township welcomes customer feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Township can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

Feedback can be provided by any one of the following methods from September 1st to November 1st:

In Person or Mail: Township of Horton
2253 Johnston Rd.
Renfrew, ON. K7V 3Z8

E-mail: reception@hortontownship.ca

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 information and service.