



2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Objectives	4
Development of The Plan	4
Voting Location	5
Proxy Voting	8
Assistance To Candidates	8
Service Animals	8
Campaign Expenses	8
Voting Methods	8
Communications	9
Alternate Formats	9
General Election Material	9
Service Disruptions	9
Feedback	10
Schedule A – Voting Location Accessibility Audit Checklist	11

Introduction

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election for the Municipality of North Grenville.

The Municipality of North Grenville has made efforts in promoting a barrier free community. Commitment has been made in the provision of accessible customer service to persons with disabilities. In an effort to ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with core principals of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported following the election.

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., s. 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).

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

43 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of 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).

Objectives

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Municipality 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 are able to 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 Municipality's website and social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter).

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. The purposed Election Accessibility Plan was reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee to confirm needs are being met prior to its finalization;

2. Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election were established to ensure that people with disabilities are able to 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
3. 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

For the purpose of this plan, Voting Location includes the exterior parking and walkways associated with the location.

In order to ensure that each Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Location Accessibility Audit Checklist will be completed prior to confirming the site as a Voting Location.

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each Voting Location has been conducted to ensure that each Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities. The site location accessibility audit checklist is included as Schedule "A" to this document.

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 close 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 traversed. 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 actually 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 areas.

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.

Voting Location Institutions

The Municipal Elections Act requires that on voting day, a voting location shall be provided on the premises of the following:

Voting places in institutions, retirement homes

45 (7) On voting day, a voting place shall be provided on the premises of the following:

An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces;

An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm;

A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (7); 2016, c. 15, s. 34 (2, 3)

Attendance on resident

(8) The deputy returning officer for a voting place described in subsection (7) may attend on an elector who is a resident of the institution or retirement home, to allow him or her to vote. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (8)

Attendance on electors with disabilities

(9) To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a deputy returning officer shall attend on the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place. 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (3).

For the 2022 Municipal Election, the following institution locations have been identified:

- Kemptville Retirement Living – 2950 County Road 43, Kemptville
- Southbridge Long-Term Care Home – 121 George Street West, Kemptville
- Bayfield Manor Retirement Community - 100 Elvira Street, Kemptville

Proxy Voting

An elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a Voting Location may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on their behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available at the Clerks Department. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance Voting Location or on the final voting day. On the final voting day, the proxy must be exercised at a Voting Location on behalf of the person who is unable to attend. The appointment of a proxy may only be made after 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day, August 19, 2022, and is null and void after the final voting day.

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 directly 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 Municipality will be using a paper ballot where on which electors choose their preferred candidate(s) by placing a mark, with a black marker in the square 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.

The Municipality will also be using telephone and internet voting systems to permit electors to choose their preferred candidate without having to attend at a Voting Location. The Intelivote System meets the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) requirements ensuring that persons with differing abilities are able to vote using the system. Voters with visual disabilities can vote using screen readers. If a person wishes to use the telephone/internet voting system and needs assistance, the Municipal Office will host a Voter Help Centre where election staff may assist in the voting process.

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

Communications

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 Municipality 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 Municipality or is supplied by a third party, the Municipality 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 Municipality 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 Municipality 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 Municipality'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 Municipality 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 Location, 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 Municipality's website and election website;
- on Facebook;
- posted at the site of disruption; and
- where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

Feedback

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

Feedback can be provided by any one of the following methods:

In Person or Mail:

Municipality of North Grenville,
Clerks Department,
285 County Road 44,
Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0

E-mail: ngvotes@northgrenville.on.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.

Schedule A – Voting Location Accessibility Audit Checklist

Exterior Access

1. Is there Exterior Signage?

- ☐ Is the identifier clearly visible from the street and the sidewalk?

2. Is there accessible parking?

- ☐ What is the total number of parking spaces on site?
- ☐ What is the total number of accessible parking spaces on site?
- ☐ Are the accessible parking spaces at least 2400 mm (95") in width?
- ☐ Are the accessible parking spaces located on a firm, level surface?
- ☐ Are the accessible parking spaces designated by a vertical sign?
- ☐ Are the accessible parking spaces designated by markings on the pavement?

3. Is there an unobstructed path from parking to main entrance?

- ☐ Is the maximum running slope of the walkway not steeper than 1:20?
- ☐ Are curb cuts provided to the barrier-free path of travel?
- ☐ Is the approach to the voting place easy to travel (no broken pavement or potholes)?
- ☐ Is there a ramp located in the barrier-free path of travel?
- ☐ Does the ramp have a maximum slope of 1:12 or less?
- ☐ Is the width of the ramp between handrails 910 mm (36") or greater?
- ☐ If the ramp is longer than 9 m (29.5") is there a landing with minimum dimensions of 1500 mm x 1500 mm (5' x 5')?
- ☐ Is the path well lit?

4. Interior Access

Is there an accessible entrance into the building?

- ☐ Is the entrance well lit?
- ☐ Is the threshold at the entrance 13 mm (1/2") or less?
- ☐ Is the width of the door opening a minimum of 810 mm (32")?
- ☐ Does the main accessible entrance have an automatic door opener?
- ☐ Is the entrance clearly marked with signage?

Are interior corridors and doorways accessible?

- ☐ Is the elevator clearly visible or is there adequate signage?
- ☐ Is the area free of obstacles (no uneven surfaces, tripping hazards)?
- ☐ Is the width of the door opening a minimum of 810 mm (32")?
- ☐ Is there level access from the entrance of the voting location to the voting area?
- ☐ Is the flooring non-slip, even and level?

5. Voting Location

- ☐ Is the voting location well lit?
- ☐ Are there seats available for people to rest if needed?
- ☐ Is there enough space inside the voting area for a wheelchair to move easily?

Does the building have an accessible washroom?

- ☐ Is the washroom clearly identified by signage?