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<b>Subject:</b> 2022 Municipal Elections: Accessibility Initiatives	<b>Report No.:</b> CS-004-2023
<b>Posted:</b> January 20, 2023	<b>Agenda Date:</b> February 7, 2023

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## **Attachments**

**Appendix 01:** 2022 Election Accessibility Plan

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended:

1. That Council for the City of Temiskaming Shores acknowledges receipt of Administrative Report CS-004-2023 regarding Accessibility Initiatives undertaken for the 2022 Municipal Election for information purposes.

## **Background**

Section 12.1 (1) and 12.1 (2) of the Municipal Elections Act reads as follows:

### **12.1 (1) Electors and candidates with disabilities**

A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

### **12.1 (2) Report**

Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities

## **Analysis**

As part of the planning process for the 2022 Municipal Elections, the following actions were taken to identify barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities:

- Developed the 2022 Election Accessibility Plan as a guiding reference to ensuring accessibility targets were met throughout the Election process (Attached as Appendix 01)
- Created an accessibility checklist for election personnel to use when conducting site visits of each voting location.

- Provided on-line and telephone voting options for electors who wished the ability to vote from their homes.
- Assessed the risk of our past election administration practices, identifying the likelihood of our practice creating a risk to accessibility of candidates and electors and we then identified the impact of the risk and developed measures to mitigate or minimize the risk.

### **Removal and Prevention of Barriers**

The following actions were taken to remove and prevent barriers that have the potential to affect electors and candidates with disabilities:

i. Communications and Information

- Ensured communication initiatives and information for candidates and electors were available in alternate formats, upon request.
- Attended Temiskaming Shores Accessibility Advisory Committee (TSAAC) meeting to advise of the introduction of on-line and telephone voting for the 2022 Election, and review the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan
- Posted information to municipality's website and social media platforms – for both electors and candidates
- Provided candidates and staff with information relating to accessible customer service.
- Advertised all key dates and information for voters on the City's website, Social Media Platforms, CJTT FM and the Temiskaming Speaker

ii. Voting Locations

- Conducted site visits of all voting locations with a representative from TSAAC to ensure accessibility targets were met. Items were also noted for consideration, such as the repair of uneven/missing interlock at City Hall and the addition of automatic door openers on City Hall public washrooms. *(Fall of 2022, the interlocking brick at City Hall was replaced)*
- Provided appropriate signage at voting locations.
- Permitted service animals and support persons in all voting locations.
- Ensured designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location, and adequate outdoor lighting.

iii. Voting

- Three advance voting dates for paper ballots were held at Dymond Community Hall, Riverside Place and City Hall. Advance polls were held from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with the exception of Riverside Place being from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- On-line and Telephone Voting was available 24/7 for a period of 10 days leading up to October 24<sup>th</sup>; with technical support provided by City Election staff made available by telephone or email. Customer Service was also available to assist electors with online or telephone voting at each polling location as well
- In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, provided voting opportunities on the premises of:
  - a) institutions in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed – Timiskaming Lodge, Temiskaming Extendicare, and the Timiskaming Hospital
  - b) a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied – Northdale Manor

iv. Staff Training

- Staff training incorporated provisions to meet accessible customer service and the integrated standards.
- Monitored elector's concerns and ensured that their needs were met, i.e., if an individual with a walker was in a long line, staff observed, and if felt that the elector was having difficulties, offered a chair and ensured that their place was saved in the voting line-up.
- Ensured that electors were aware that magnifiers were available.
- Directed election workers to observe electors during discussions with them, and if it appeared that the voter was having difficulty understanding, ensured that the voter was able to clearly understand the speaker.
- Encouraged election workers to approach an elector if it appeared that the elector required assistance to get around in the voting location.
- Election workers were trained to identify a service animal and followed the Municipality's Accessible Customer Service Policy.

- Election workers were encouraged to maintain a friendly and approachable demeanor. Many of the election workers were experienced; and City staff received several compliments and positive feedback regarding the electors voting experience.

**Financial / Staffing Implications**

This item has been approved in the current budget:    Yes     No     N/A

This item is within the approved budget amount:    Yes     No     N/A

**Alternatives**

**Submission**

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Reviewed and submitted  
 for Council's consideration  
 by:

*"Original signed by"*

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# **2022 Municipal and School Board Election**

Monday, October 24, 2022

## **2022 Election Accessibility Plan**

The policies, procedures and forms described in this document are subject to change at the discretion of the Clerk. Any amendments shall be underlined and state the date of the amendment.

Reviewed by the Temiskaming Shores Accessibility Advisory Committee – June 15, 2022

Revision No. 0

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## **1. Overview**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The 2022 Election Accessibility Plan supports fair, full and equal access to electoral services for persons with disabilities. The principal focus of this plan is to provide appropriate and accessible services to electors, candidates and staff during the 2022 Municipal Elections by:

- providing accessible electoral services to electors and candidates;
- identifying and eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities;
- providing services that respect the dignity and independence of electors with differing abilities;
- conducting the election in a manner that ensures that persons with differing abilities are able to vote independently and privately with access to voting assistance if required; and
- creating a positive voting experience.

The Clerk's Office will continue to learn, develop and adjust approaches to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

This planning document was developed in advance of the election to identify measures to be taken and reported to Council following the election. This plan may be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

### **1.2 Municipal Elections Act**

The Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2022 municipal election.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, states the following:

- 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 (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 (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.

41 (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).

45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

### 1.3 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, as amended, (“AODA”), includes the following definitions:

**Barrier** means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)

**Disability** means,

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”)

### 1.4 Election Accessibility Plan (the “plan”)

This Plan is a “living” document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. The Plan was reviewed with members of the Temiskaming Shores Accessibility Advisory Committee, and will provide an overview of the following items:

- developing and providing accessibility training to all election officials;
- providing information to voters and candidates in an accessible method;
- ensuring all voting locations are accessible to electors with differing abilities;
- assisting candidates and electors with differing abilities; and



- continuing to consult with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons with differing abilities to better understand their needs.

## **2. Training**

Designated election staff will be trained on accessible election equipment and assisting electors with a disability. All election staff will be trained on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities and with persons who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.

## **3. Election Information and Communications**

Information is available in an alternative format upon request.

This plan and other information regarding accessibility will be posted on the City's website, and made available to candidates and third party registrants.

Information on the 2022 Municipal Election is available in printed format from the Clerk's Office (325 Farr Drive in Haileybury), or electronically at by contacting: [clerk@temiskamingshores.ca](mailto:clerk@temiskamingshores.ca)

### **3.1 Candidate and Third Party Information**

Expenses which are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and which would not have been incurred except for the purpose of running for an office in the election, to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

### **3.2 Notice of Temporary Service Disruption**

If a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services occurs, notice will be posted on the City's website, the City's social media platforms, and in the local media, if possible. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort will be made to provide alternative methods of delivering the information or service to persons with differing abilities.

## **4. Accessible Voting Locations**

To ensure that each voting location is accessible to electors with differing abilities, an accessible voting location inspection/ checklist (Appendix 01) will be completed for each in-person voting location before the start of the voting period. The accessibility checklist includes the assessment of the following:

- parking areas;
- exterior walkways and ramps;
- entrances and hallways;

- elevators/stairways (if applicable);
- fire exits;
- general layout and services;
- public washrooms; and
- facility signage and information systems.

Upon completion of the inspection/ checklist, a list of any barriers which have been identified will be reviewed to determine if they can be modified to accommodate electors with differing abilities or if an alternative location is required.

#### **4.1 Voting Assistance**

Election officials at in-person voting locations (during the advance voting period and on Election Day), will accommodate all electors requesting assistance, upon request. All election workers take an “Oath of Secrecy” for this purpose. An election official in the voting location can assist the voter in casting their vote (online or paper ballot), or an elector may request that a person of their choosing assist them in marking their ballot (online or paper ballot). That individual will be required to take an “Oath of Secrecy” prior to being permitted to assist. A magnifying glass will be made available to assist any individual with visual impairments.

#### **4.2 Accessible Voting Equipment**

If a voter is unable to physically enter a voting location, the Deputy Returning Officer may attend anywhere within the area designated as the Voting Place. All election workers take an “Oath of Secrecy” for this purpose.

### **5. Voting Methods**

The City will be working with Intelivote Systems Inc. to provide eVoting services to eligible voters during the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via telephone, internet or in-person at a polling/ voting station during the October 14 – 24, 2022 voting period.

Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can present accessible opportunities for persons with disabilities to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

The Intelivote Voting System provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation. Additionally, persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes can now use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

By offering voting from any location and from a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the voter to vote without any assistance. This provides persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters. If persons with disabilities do require assistance in the voting process, trained Election Officials will be present at in-person polling locations offered across the City of Temiskaming Shores throughout the voting period.

### **5.1 Telephone Voting**

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone, and the toll-free telephone number, date of birth, and the PIN number contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot. Communications barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Barriers may be identified as low volume, use of language that is not clear or plain, and confusing or unorganized menu options.

The Intelivote telephone voting application provides the following:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices.
- Clear, plain language.
- Menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections.
- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized.

### **5.2 Internet Voting**

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their date of birth and PIN and qualifying information, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter.

The Intelivote System has been created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), so that persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting system. It is compliant with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium website principles, which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio.

### **5.3 In-person Voting at Polling/Voting Station(s)**

For those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or Internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, several advance polling/ voting station(s) and Election Day polling/ voting station(s) will be open to provide in-person internet voting and/ or paper voting opportunities via a laptop, tablet, and/ or paper ballots.

Voters may attend one of the following polling/ voting station locations throughout the voting period. The City will be operating the following voting place location(s) during the Advance Voting Period:

**October 14, 2022: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Riverside Place  
55 Riverside Drive

**October 15, 2022: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Dymond Community Hall  
181 Drive-In Theatre Road

**October 17, 2022: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

City Hall, City of Temiskaming Shores  
325 Farr Drive

The following polling/ voting location(s) will be open on Election Day, Monday October 24, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**Riverside Place**

55 Riverside Drive

**Dymond Community Hall**

181 Drive-In Theatre Road

**City Hall, City of Temiskaming Shores**

325 Farr Drive, Haileybury

## **5.4 Special Voting Provisions**

On Election Day, Election staff shall visit long-term care facilities and retirement homes within the City, to set-up on-site voting kiosks for residents of the facility or retirement home only.

## **6. Continued Improvement/ Feedback**

Clerk's Department staff members are available throughout the election to assist with any matters that may arise with respect to providing an accessible election.

### **6.1 Feedback Process**

Feedback provides an opportunity to take corrective measures to address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services. The City welcomes comments to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the City can improve the delivery of an accessible election. Feedback

on this Plan may be submitted through the following methods and will be summarized in the post-election accessibility report:

By telephone: 705-672-3363 Extension 4136

By email: [clerk@temiskamingshores.ca](mailto:clerk@temiskamingshores.ca)

In person or by mail:

**City of Temiskaming Shores**  
P.O. Box 2050, 325 Farr Drive  
Haileybury, Ontario  
P0J 1K0

## **6.2 Post-Election Accessibility Report**

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after voting day, the Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The report will also identify gaps in service and/ or areas that can be improved on for future elections. The post-election report will be posted on the City's website in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, and distributed to other stakeholders on request.

## **7. Candidates**

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed to ensure that they are fully accessible.

<b>2022 Election Barrier-Free Accessibility Checklist</b>	
Location:	
Property Manager:	
Phone Number:	
Availability of Custodial Staff:	
<b>Parking</b>	
Adequate number of parking spaces?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Number of Accessible Parking Spaces:	
Vertical Signage	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Pavement Markings	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Location in respect to the entrance way/distance to walk:	
Is there adequate lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Walkways and Ramps</b>	
Surface:	<input type="checkbox"/> Paved or Concrete <input type="checkbox"/> Gravel
Accessible route from parking to entrance	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Surface to voting location easy to travel and in good condition	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Curb cuts where required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Is there a ramp to replace steps	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Is the ramp well designed and safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Handrails	Required: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Available <input type="checkbox"/> Not Available
Obstacles:	

<b>Drop-off and Loading Zones</b>			
Location:			
Lighting			
Surface:		<input type="checkbox"/> Paved or Concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravel
Appropriate for Voter Drop-off/Handi-Van:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:			
Resolution:			
<b>Entrances and exterior Doors</b>			
Identify entrance to be used: <b>Election Signs will be posted (Voting location)</b>			
Is door hardware accessible:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is door wide enough for wheelchair or scooter:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Power Assist		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Location of Button:			
Direction of Door Swing		<input type="checkbox"/> Inward	<input type="checkbox"/> Outward
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (sliding)			
Exterior lighting of entrance:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Adequate turnaround space in vestibule for wheelchair:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable			
<b>Lobby, Hallways &amp; Corridors</b>			
Path of travel from entrance			
Are corridors inside the voting facility spacious enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass comfortably:			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there level access from the entrance of the voting facility to the voting area			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Are any doormats level with the floor: (If not, remove)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is voting facility well-lit:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Obstacles:		
<b>Interior Doors</b>		
Is door hardware accessible:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is door wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Power Assist	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Location of Button		
Direction of Door Swing	<input type="checkbox"/> Inward	<input type="checkbox"/> Outward
If no power assist, can door be propped open in a safe manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Vision Panels	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Fire Exits</b>		
Signage		
Location		
Are fire exits accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Washrooms</b>		
Available to the public	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is door handle accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does width of door meet accessible standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Power Assist	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Location of Button:		



Direction of Door Swing	<input type="checkbox"/> Inward	<input type="checkbox"/> Outward
If no power assist, can door be propped open in a safe manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there an accessible washroom stall	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Voting Room</b>		
Is there enough space inside the voting area for a wheelchair or a scooter	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Number of exits:		
Regulations for service animals in the voting place	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**Comments:**