



2022 Municipal Election

October 24, 2022

Election Accessibility Plan 2022

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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan supports fair, full and equal access to electoral services for persons with disabilities.

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Town will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all voters 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 information on eligible candidates;
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an voter, candidate or election official;
- That efforts are made to ensure that voters with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels including, but not limited to the newspaper, the Town's website and social media.

The Town Clerk's Office will continue to learn, develop and adjust our approaches in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The review of accessibility issues and initiatives and addressing barrier prevention or removal is an ongoing practice. This plan may be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

1.2 Municipal Elections Act

The Town Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all voters 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 voters and candidates with disabilities.
- 12.1(2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect voters 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 voters 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 voters 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 voters with disabilities.
- 52 (1) 4. The deputy returning officer may permit an voter who needs assistance in voting to have such assistance as the deputy returning officer considers necessary.

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;

1.4 Election Accessibility Plan (the “plan”)

This plan provides an overview of the following items:

- developing and providing accessibility training to all election officials
- providing information to voters and candidates in an accessible format
- ensuring all voting locations are accessible to voters with differing abilities
- assisting candidates and voters with differing abilities
- continuing to consult with individuals and with groups, such as the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee who are knowledgeable in providing services to persons with differing abilities to better understand their needs.

2. Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a manner that accommodates their needs.

Training will include:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various disabilities including those who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
2. How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services.
3. What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

3. Election Communications

Candidates and voters with disabilities will be able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that takes into account their disability. The format may be agreed upon between the requester and the Town Clerk.

This plan and other information regarding accessibility will be provided to candidates and third party advertisers and posted on the Town’s website.

3.1 Candidates and Third Party Information

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 third party advertiser who is an individual with a disability.

3.2 Information for Election Workers

Election Worker application forms shall be available in an AODA compliant format.

3.3 Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, Town staff shall provide public notice on the Town's website, at the physical site of the disruption and when possible, in the local media. The notice shall include the following information:

- Reason for the disruption
- Expected duration of the disruption
- If available, an alternative means of obtaining the service

Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

4. Accessible Voting Locations

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

Information regarding Advance Voting opportunities and Election Day voting information will be available on the Town's election portal at elections.orangeville.ca.

4.1 Parking

Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked and in compliance with the Town's Traffic By-law. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of advance voting days and voting day.

4.2 Entrance to Voting Locations

Every effort shall be made to ensure that the entrance door(s) into a voting location are barrier free and are wide enough for a wheelchair or other mobility device to pass through. If the doors are heavy, awkward to open or have handles that are in close reach, where possible they will be propped open in a safe manner, an alternative entrance will be provided, or election staff will be available to assist.

4.3 Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth shall be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit, and seating made available.

4.4 Voting Assistance

On voting day, election officials will accommodate all voters requesting assistance.

4.5 Support Persons

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting location. In addition, an Election Official in each voting location can assist a voter, if needed. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided.

4.6 Accessible Voting Equipment – Advance Voting and Voting Day

The Town will provide accessible voting equipment on advance voting days and on voting day at one designated location for all eligible voters. This includes the use of an audio ballot marker that uses either a sip'n'puff, Assisted Technology Device or paddle to mark and move through ballot suggestions. Magnifying sheets will be made available to assist any individual with visual impairments.

4.7 Reduced Hour Voting Locations

The Clerk will establish reduced hour voting locations at various designated times on voting day to give eligible residents the opportunity to vote, in accordance with section 45 (7) of the Municipal Elections Act, at:

1. An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces.
2. An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm.
3. A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied.

If the voter is unable to physically attend the voting location, an Election Official may attend to a voter in their specific living areas or at their bedside to assist them to vote.

4.8 Vote at Home Program

A qualified voter who requires assistance or is unable to go to a voting location because of a disability can make a request to the Clerk for an election official(s) to attend at their home to administer the voting process.

4.9 Proxy Voting

A person 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 Clerk's Office. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory

declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Once certified the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on election day.

4.10 Service Animals

Candidates, Scrutineers and Voters requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

A service animal should be easily identified through visual indicators, such as a harness or a vest.

5. Continued Improvements/Feedback

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

5.1 Feedback Process

Your feedback 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 services.

Feedback regarding the manner in which the election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted by:

Telephone:	519-941-0440
Email	elections@orangeville.ca
Website	elections.orangeville.ca
Mail or in person	Clerk's Office, Town Hall 87 Broadway, Orangeville ON L9W 1K1

5.2 Post-Election Accessibility Report

A post-election accessibility report will be presented to Town Council and will assess the plan put in place to address accessibility barriers. 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 Town's website in an accessible format.