



# Township of Otonabee South Monaghan

## **Election Accessibility Plan** 2022 Municipal Election



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## 1. Purpose

The Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to fully participate in the Municipal Elections with dignity and in a consistent manner with all Otonabee-South Monaghan electors. This procedure shall set forth the process for ensuring this commitment is successfully achieved.

## 2. Introduction

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Municipal Clerk is required to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2022 Municipal Elections. Specifically, the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* include:

- a) the secrecy and confidentiality of the individual votes is paramount;
- b) the election should be fair and non-biased;
- c) the election should be accessible to the voters;
- d) the integrity of the process should be maintained throughout the election;
- e) there be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast; and
- f) voters and candidates should be treated fairly and consistently within a municipality.
- g) a proper majority vote decides the election by ensuring, so far as reasonably possible, that valid votes be counted and invalid votes be rejected.

Accordingly, the 2022 Municipal Elections will be conducted in such a manner to ensure that:

- a) Candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services.
- b) Persons with disabilities have full access to Voter Information Centre.

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended*, following the election, the Municipal Clerk will submit a report to Council concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

## 3. Development of 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. In order to develop the plan, several steps were taken in order to ensure that the statutory requirements were met and a feasible implementation plan was in place. During the development of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies and other supporting materials from AMCTO, neighboring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, technology suppliers and other various stakeholder groups.

- Establish staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities are able to obtain assistance in a positive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated

## 2. **Customer Service Standard**

The Customer Service Standard guides organizations on how to provide services to people with disabilities using the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

To do this, organizations must make sure that they:

- Establish policies, practices, and procedures
- Provide staff training on customer service
- Provide goods and services in an accessible manner
- Provide accessible communication and documents
- Allow for service animals and support persons
- Have a method to provide feedback
- To provide notice of service disruption
- Ensure that all emergency procedures, plans, and public safety information are available in accessible formats, if requested

### **Voting Methods**

The Township will offer internet and telephone voting for the 2022 election. Both of these methods allow electors to vote from anywhere within the defined voting period using a telephone or the internet. Electronic and telephone voting stations will also be available at the Municipal office during the defined voting period for public use.

### **Telephone Voting**

Telephone voting will provide eligible voters with an audio voting option using a touch-tone telephone, and the toll-free telephone number, and the PIN number contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot. Instructions, such as listing candidate names in alphabetical order, are heard through a handset and electors make their selections when prompted using the keypad. The voter hears the audio ballot and uses the telephone key pad to select the candidates they wish to vote for.

## **Internet Voting**

Internet voting allows any elector with access to a smartphone, tablet device, gaming device or desk top computer to independently cast a ballot at any time, or in any place that is most convenient to them by using their PIN and qualifying information, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Information Letter. This method of voting provides persons with disabilities, electors who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairments, and/or do not have access to transportation the same independence and privacy as other voters to participate in the election.

Internet voting is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0), which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio. Additionally, persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes could now use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

The Township will use a two-step process for online voting. Eligible voters will receive a personalized voting instruction package by mail in advance of Election Day. The voting package will provide details on how to vote online or by phone. The information package will also include a secret PIN number that electors use to access the voting system. The PIN number, in conjunction with a personal piece of information would be required for voters to vote. By combining these two pieces of information, the integrity of the vote is maintained. Electors may request the personalized voting instructions via email as well.

The voting period for the Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan will run from October 11 – 24, 2022.

## **In-person Voting at a Voting Help Centre**

For those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or internet, or who require assistance of a trained Election Official, voting stations will be open to provide in-person internet voting opportunities via a laptop, tablet or phone.

Access to the voting station interior and voting area shall be level and slip resistant. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area shall be well lit and seating shall be available. Entrance corridors shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter.

An accessible voting area will be available at each voting location. These areas shall be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively.

Voters may attend the voting station location throughout the voting period. The municipality will be operating the following voting place location during the Voting period.

**Municipal Office, 20 Third Street, Keene**

Monday to Friday October 11 – 21 from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Election Day Monday, October 24 from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM

**Voting Assistance**

The following voting provisions are in place to accommodate the voting needs of Electors with disabilities:

- **Support Persons:** Is a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods and/or services. The person assisting the elector will need to make an oral oath with the Deputy-Returning Officer prior to providing any such assistance.
- **Assistive Personal Equipment:** Assistive personal devices include but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping. An assistive device shall mean a device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing services of persons or organizations by the customer service standard.
- **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

## **Training**

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

- a) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- b) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- c) How to clearly explain internet and telephone voting;
- d) What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services, and
- e) How to provide voter assistance if requested.

## **Assistance to Candidates**

The Township will provide candidates with information on how to make their campaigns accessible, which will include providing them with resource material.

## **Campaign Expenses**

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate. Examples of these expenses are: sign language interpreters for door-to-door campaigning, accessible transportation to attend campaign events/Candidates meetings, and cost of specialized software.

## **Parking**

Designated parking for individuals with disabilities is provided close to the entrance of the Voting place (municipal office). Accessible parking spaces are clearly posted and easy to see from the road and marked with the International Symbol of Access.

## **Customer Service Feedback**

The Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan is committed to providing high quality goods or services to all member of the public or third parties it serves. Feedback from the public or third parties is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements in the delivery of an Accessible Election. Township Customer Feedback forms will be available and may be submitted in person at the Township Office, through regular mail or email and alternate formats can be made available upon request.

## **4. Information And Communication Standards**

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 Disruption**

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township's control temporary service disruptions may be experienced. The Township will make reasonable efforts to maintain services or to provide alternate services until normal operations can resume. In extenuating circumstances, the Clerk (Returning Officer) may extend the hours of voting.

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

## **9. Reporting**

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after voting day, the Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

## 10. **Additional Information**

### ***Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan Office - Staff Assistance***

Election staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

We can be reached using the contact information provided below:

**Telephone:** (705) 295-6852 or 1-800-999-4861

**Website:** [www.osmtownship.ca](http://www.osmtownship.ca)

**In Person:** Municipal Office, 20 Third Street, Keene, ON K0L 2G0

**Mail:** Clerk, Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan, P.O. Box 70, 20 Third Street, Keene, ON K0L 2G0

As well, the Clerk/Returning Officer or the Deputy-Returning Officer can be contacted directly for assistance:

Heather Scott, Clerk/Returning Officer

(705) 295-6852 ext 223, E-mail: [hscott@osmtownship.ca](mailto:hscott@osmtownship.ca)

Jackie Fitzgerald, Deputy-Returning Officer

(705) 295-6852 ext 216, E-mail: [jackief@osmtownship.ca](mailto:jackief@osmtownship.ca)

### ***Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan – Election Website***

The Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan's Election website is updated regularly to reflect any new developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year at [www.osmtownship.ca](http://www.osmtownship.ca)

### ***Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - Election Website***

This website contains information about municipal elections, the Province of Ontario 2014 Municipal Elections Candidates Guide and the Ministry's commitment to promote greater accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities [www.mah.gov.on.ca](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca)

### ***Ministry of Community and Social Services***

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has developed several quick reference guides with respect to the overall management of an accessible election campaign. For more information candidates can visit:

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/accessibility>

## ***Service Ontario – e-Laws***

This website contains all current statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)

Appendix "A" – Election Help Centre Inspection Checklist

Appendix "A"

## Election Help Centre Inspection Checklist

### Location Inspection - General

Inspection Date & Time	
Scheduling Notes	
Inspected by	
General Comments	
Outcome (Pass/ Fail)	

### Facility - General

Opening / Closing contact name	
Election Day Contact Telephone #	
Accessible Washrooms - Men?	
Accessible Washrooms - Women?	
Telephone Available?	
WiFi Available?	
Power Supply Test	
Router tested and passed?	
Outlet from Table (in feet) – maximum length	
Accessible secondary exit option?	
Facility Notes	

### Facility Accessibility

Name and address visible from street?	
Entrance accessible?	
Ramp well designed and safe?	
Door hardware accessible?	
Can door accommodate wheelchair?	
Door easy to open?	
Entrance easy to see?	
Entrance well lit?	
Flooring non-slip, even and level?	
Inside voting location well lit?	
Corridors able to accommodate wheelchair?	
Facility Accessibility Notes	

## Equipment

# of Chairs required?	
Chairs supplied?	
# of tables required?	
Tables supplied?	
First Aid equipment available?	In Main Office – FD across the street
Equipment Notes	

## Parking

# of staff spaces	
# of spaces available for public?	
# of on-street parking spaces?	
Distance parking to voting area? (ft)	
External lighting?	
External lighting on a timer?	
Confirmed lights stay on?	
# of accessible parking spaces?	1
Accessible parking clearly marked?	Yes
Parking lot firm and level?	
Space large enough for van with lift?	
Route smooth and unobstructed?	
Route wide enough for wheelchair/scooter?	
Parking Notes	

## Special Voting Locations

Retirement Residence Type	n/a
Voting Area(s)	n/a
Beds - Comments	n/a
Best option for Voters' list management?	n/a
Do you have a lockdown procedure?	n/a
Lockdown procedure - comments	n/a
Roving / Stationary Poll - comments	n/a
Hours of Voting	n/a
Discuss Voters List Dates	n/a
Discuss Voters' List Review Period	n/a
Discuss Voting Times	n/a
Opportunity for family poster?	n/a
Level access - entrance to voting area?	n/a

## Accessibility Report Card

Assign each category a grading of 1-5 (1 – Not Accessible, 2 – Poor, 3 – Acceptable, 4 – Exceeds Expectations, 5 – Not Applicable)

Parking	
Main Entrance	
Building Identification	
Ramps	
Pathway to EHC	
Elevator / Lift	
Accessible Washrooms	
Lighting	
Overall Grade	

## Comments