



# 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

## BACKGROUND

In accordance with subsection 12.1 (2) of the *Municipal Elections Act*, the Town Clerk is required to report on the actions undertaken to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to residents with disabilities seeking to vote in the 2022 Municipal Election. This report outlines the accessibility initiatives implemented prior to the October 24 election.

On December 17, 2009, the *Municipal Elections Act* was amended to include the following clauses, as they relate to candidates and voters with disabilities.

### **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. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (8).

### **12.1 (3) Report - barriers**

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, part.

## REPORT

In 2022, the following initiatives were undertaken by staff, within the Legislative and Legal Services Division, to identify, remove, and prevent barriers facing candidates and voters with disabilities during the planning and implementation of the 2022 Municipal Election:

### **Identification of Barriers**

- Sought feedback and recommendations from the Coordinator, Accessibility on various strategies and methods for meeting the accessibility needs of voters with disabilities.
- Developed and used an accessibility checklist for staff to conduct site audits for potential polling locations.
- Sought feedback from the members of the Milton Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure full accessibility and inclusion prior to, and during, election day.

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

#### Information and Communications

- The Town's corporate accessibility feedback form was reviewed and it was confirmed that this form includes elections as a subject matter for providing feedback.
- All relevant candidate and voter materials were created as accessible digital documents prior to being posted on the MiltonVotes page of the Town's website.

- All correspondence to applicants for election worker positions included a notification related to the availability of workplace accommodations upon request.
- Links were provided on the Town's election webpages to relevant candidate resources, including information on conducting an accessible all candidates meeting and accessible campaign materials.

### Voting Locations

- In order to assess accessibility features and considerations, site audits were conducted at all potential voting locations.
- Election staff ensured that all voting locations provided the following accessibility features:
  - Parking within close proximity to the main entrance;
  - Grade level or ramped main entrances;
  - Automatic door openers or sliding doors on the main entrance, or a staff member to open the door;
  - Wider routes, to and from the voting room, which accommodated safe passage for a wheelchair, scooter, or other mobility device; and
  - Signage which adhered to accessibility and clear print guidelines.
- Service animals and support persons for voters were allowed at all polling locations during voting hours.
- Special Voting locations were established for facility residents at the following locations to support electors at these locations:
  - Martindale Gardens
  - Allendale Long Term Care Facility
  - Seasons Milton
  - Milton District Hospital
  - Birkdale Place

### Voting

- Vote by Mail was offered as a remote voting option for voters who were unable to vote in-person or preferred to mail-in their completed ballots.
- Proxy Voting was provided as an option for voters, who were unable to vote for any reason (during the advance voting period or on Voting Day), to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf.
- Training was provided to all election staff on how to assist an elector with a disability.
- Oral Oaths or Affirmations of Friend of Elector were made available for voters who required assistance with marking their ballot or for electors who required an interpreter
- Instructions were posted at each voting screen at voting locations, which provided a visual infographic of how to vote step by step.
- Magnifiers were provided behind every voting screen.
- Voting was provided to electors on the premises of:
  - An institution, in which 20 or more beds are occupied by people with disabilities; and

- A retirement facility, in which 50 or more beds are occupied

#### Staff Training

- All election staff were provided with a copy of the Town's Accessible Customer Service training brochure, included in their training manual.
- All in-person training sessions included presentation slides related to best practices for providing accessible customer service to voters with disabilities

#### Survey

- Election workers were provided an online survey following the 2022 Municipal Election and election workers who completed this survey were asked to provide an overall rating out of 5 for the accessibility of the of the voting location in which they worked. The result of this survey produced an average rating of 4.5 from election workers who completed this survey.
- Comments were solicited from election workers about the voting locations and election workers provided useful and positive feedback regarding the benefits of providing chairs at voting screens and the parking lots of the voting locations.

#### **SUMMARY**

A number of initiatives were undertaken during the planning and implementation of the 2022 Municipal Election to identify, remove, and prevent barriers facing candidates and voters with disabilities.

This report will assist with the preparation and planning of future municipal elections.