



Election Accessibility Plan

2022 Municipal Election

This plan is for use in the 2022 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Municipality of Kincardine Accessibility Policies and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* standards.

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Introduction

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the appropriate legislation and administrative conduct of the municipal election in the Municipality of Kincardine.

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA), Section 12.1(1) places responsibility on the Clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities.

Section 12.1(2) of the MEA requires that 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.

The municipal election will be conducted in a manner that shall ensure candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services, including the Help Centre at the Municipal Administration Centre. The election shall be conducted in a manner that ensures that persons with disabilities are able to vote independently and privately with access to voting assistance if required.

Section 12.1(3) of the MEA requires that within ninety (90) days of voting day the Clerk who is responsible for conducting the election 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.

Disabilities can take many forms, both visible and invisible. The following criteria were considered in the development of this plan:

- Policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- Access to electoral services must be integrated and equitable;
- Initiatives should address and accommodate a wide range of abilities;
- The Municipality of Kincardine's G.G. 3.8 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy must be followed when conducting a municipal election.

Customer Service Policy

The Municipality of Kincardine is committed to making our services accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. We comply with the customer service standards of *O.Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards* under *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

In fulfilling our mission, the Municipality of Kincardine will always provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. People with disabilities will be given the same opportunity to access our services in the same

place and in a similar way as others. The Municipality's G.G. 3.8 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy can be reviewed at www.kincardine.ca.

Staff Training

Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will complete Accessible Customer Services Training and Integrated Accessible Standards Regulations (IASR) Training as well as specific Election Training. They will comply with the Municipality's G.G. 3.8 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy and Policy G.G. 3.9 Integrated Accessibility Standards. They will be able to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs.

Training will include:

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

Assistance to Electors

General

The 2022 Municipal Election will be conducted with Internet and Telephone Voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2022 Election Procedures Manual, available at www.kincardine.ca/election or from the Clerk's Department and can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

Please contact us at 519-396-3468 ext. 7111 or clerk@kincardine.ca if you require your Voter Information Package in an accessible format.

Provision of Election Information

Election information will be provided to electors and candidates with disabilities in an alternative format, agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk.

Accessible Voting Area

Section 45(2) of the MEA requires that the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

An accessible voting area, located at the Municipal Administration Centre, 1475 Concession 5, Kincardine, will be available to voters throughout the voting period during regular office hours and on Voting Day until 8:00 p.m.

Parking

The Municipal Administration Centre parking lot has designated parking for individuals with disabilities that are clearly posted and located close to the entrance to the voting area.

Entrance

The entrance to the Municipal Administration Centre voting area is level leading to entrance door. Doors to the Municipal Administration Centre have automatic door opening devices. They are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility devices.

Interior

Access to the interior voting area is level. Carpeting and doormats are level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area is well lit, and seating shall be made available. The Municipal Administration Centre also has accessible washrooms.

Accessible Voting Booth

The voting booth will be low in height and have a wide area to allow individuals using mobility aids to vote independently and secretively.

Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting area or staff can assist the voter in casting their vote. Voting area staff shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way to provide assistance. The Election Official shall require the voter making the request to take an Oral Oath to Vote with Assistance. In lieu of the Election Official providing assistance, the voter may request that a friend or support person to accompany and assist them at the Help Centre. Any friend or support person assisting shall be required to take the Oral Oath of Friend of Elector to assist and/or vote as directed by the voter.

Accessible Voting Technologies

Voting areas will have a computer for internet voting that will assist voters with disabilities in casting their votes with independence and privacy. Staff will be available

to assist voters at the kiosk upon request. Support persons and/or service animals will be accommodated.

Telephones will be made available at the Municipal Administration Centre to provide those without internet or telephone connection access to vote. Assistance will be provided as outlined in these guidelines.

Bruce County Libraries also provide internet access during regular library hours. This provides voters another option of location to access the internet if they do not have their own access to the internet.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

The Clerk shall provide public notice on the municipal website and in the local media if there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services. The Notice shall include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

Staff Assistance

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

Contact information for assistance:

Telephone: 519-396-3468 ext. 7111

Email: clerk@kincardine.ca

By Mail or In Person: Municipal Administration Centre
Clerk's Department
1475 Concession 5, RR #5
Kincardine, ON

Internet Voting

Internet voting allows voters to vote through secured internet services. This method provides for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy as voters have the option of using the assistive tools they have on their own computer.

This method of voting is designed to encourage voter participation as voters don't have to attend a physical location to cast their ballot and accessibility and privacy for persons with disabilities is maximized.

Telephone Voting

Telephone voting allows voters to vote through secured telephone services which provides for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy. Land lines or cell phones can be used to vote, the method is compatible with assistive devices.

Voters can register their vote selection with the telephone keypad or voice commands, greatly increasing accessibility, privacy and independence for voters who do not have internet access.

Assistance to Candidates and Registered Third Party Advertisers

General

The 2022 election will be conducted with Internet and Telephone Voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2022 Election Procedures Manual, available on www.kincardine.ca/election or from the Clerk's Department and can be made available in an alternative format upon request.

Please contact us at 519-396-3468 ext. 7111 or clerk@kincardine.ca if you require your Candidate Package in an accessible format.

The Clerk's Department Staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Service Animals/Support Persons

Candidates and registered third party advertisers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal and/or support person at all designated election locations.

Campaign Expenses

Campaign expenses include those that are incurred by a candidate with a disability or a registered third-party advertiser with a disability, are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate. (Section 88.19(3.9) of MEA)

Feedback Process

Feedback is encouraged and any received will be reviewed by the Clerk and appropriate action will be taken to remove barriers or provide accommodation if necessary.

Feedback on this Plan and any other election accessibility questions can be submitted by:

Email: clerk@kincardine.ca
Phone: 519-396-3468 ext. 7111
Fax: 519-396-8288
By Mail or In Person: Municipality of Kincardine
Clerk's Department
1475 Concession 5, RR #5
Kincardine, ON N2Z 2X6

Additional Information

Municipality of Kincardine Website Election Page

<https://www.kincardine.ca/en/municipal-office/election.aspx>

Municipality of Kincardine Website Accessibility in the Community Page

<https://www.kincardine.ca/en/living-here/accessibility.aspx>