



Township of The North Shore

2022 Municipal Election

Accessibility Plan

Dated: September 2022

## **Introduction**

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of the Municipal and school board elections in the Township of The North Shore. In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, and The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Municipal Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in the Municipal election.

The Elections Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the Township of The North Shore's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that election services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience.

The Township of The North Shore abides by the following principles when conducting the Municipality's Election:

- Integrity of the process is maintained throughout election
- Secrecy and confidentiality of each individual vote
- Election is fair and non-biased
- Election is accessible to the voters
- Results reflect votes cast
- Voters and candidates treated fairly and consistently

The Township of The North Shore continues to learn, develop, and adjust our approaches to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The review of accessibility issues and initiatives and addressing barriers is an ongoing practice. This plan will be updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

This report is presented to fulfill the requirements of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, in respect of the regular election held on October 24, 2022.

### **Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended – Legislative Requirements**

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.
- 12.1(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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.
- 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 electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public. 2016, c. 15 S.

- 11. 45(2) In establishing locations of voting places, the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

## **The Township of The North Shore's Accessibility Policy**

The Township of The North Shore is committed to establishing policies and practices which are consistent with the accessibility standards and four core principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. The Township's Accessibility Policy provides guidance on meeting the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005(AODA).

To view the Township of The North Shore's Accessibility Policy, please visit:

[https://townshipofthenorthshore.ca/documents/assets/uploads/files/en/accessibility\\_policy\\_2021.pdf](https://townshipofthenorthshore.ca/documents/assets/uploads/files/en/accessibility_policy_2021.pdf)

or email [municipalclerk@townshipofthenorthshore.ca](mailto:municipalclerk@townshipofthenorthshore.ca)

## **Definition of a Disability**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 defines "disability" as follows:

(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 in 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.

*Disabilities can take many forms, both visible and invisible.*

## **Customer Service**

The Township of The North Shore is committed to making our services accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. We comply with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy and the information communications standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The Township of The North Shore will, at all times, provide its services in a way that respects the independence of people with disabilities and gives people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services in the same place, and in a similar manner as others.

## **Communications and Information**

The following initiatives and actions will be carried out for the Election as it relates to communication and information:

- Provide an informative and accessible election website at:

[www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/governing/elections/](http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/governing/elections/)

- Election information shall always be provided in an accessible font and format; alternate formats may be available at the request of any individual (citizen, candidate, elections staff etc.)
- Requests for additional equipment for elections staff and members of the public who have a special need will be addressed as soon as reasonably possible, after the request is made.
- The Voter's List shall be available in both electronic and paper formats upon the Candidates request
- Establish a process for notification of disruptions to service or last-minute changes to the voting places. Notices of disruptions shall be posted on the Township website as well as the site of the disruption.

## **Alternative Voting Procedure**

Initiative: Provide an accessible voting method for all Township of The North Shore eligible electors.

### **Internet Voting**

Internet voting allows voters to vote securely anywhere the service is available. 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 such as a thumb switch or sip and puff technology.

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 where disabilities are maximized.

### Telephone Voting

Telephone voting allows voters to vote from anywhere phone service is available which offers 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, and the method is compatible with assistive devices.

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

### Voting Place

The following initiatives and actions will be carried out for the 2022 Election, as it relates to the Voting Location:

- Ensure the voting location is accessible to electors with disabilities by conducting a site visit of the voting place ahead of the election, ensuring the facility has:
  - Barrier free path of travel from parking lot/sidewalk
  - Barrier free parking
  - Door operators or accessible doors
  - Adequate lighting

- Ensure Washrooms are accessible
- Election staff will perform final accessibility checks on election day to verify the accessibility of the voting place
- Ensure voting place access routes and entrances are clearly identified
- Ensure there is a designated or reserved parking place for persons with disabilities at voting location
- If necessary, provide appropriate signage for reserved parking at voting places

### **Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities**

The following initiatives and actions will be carried out in the 2022 Election:

- Provide an election assistant solely dedicated to assisting the voters, if requested
- Ensure all election officials receive accessible customer service training

### **Service Animals**

With proper identification, individuals accompanied by a service animal are permitted at all voting locations.

## **Support Person**

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person. In addition, an Election Official can assist the voter if required.

## **Feedback**

The Township of The North Shore welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Township can improve the delivery of an accessible election. This plan will continue to undergo changes as we progress. Please provide feedback and how best we can provide an accessible election to:

Municipal Clerk – Rachel Schneider

Phone: 705-849-2213 Ext 25

Email: [municipalclerk@townshipofthenorthshore.ca](mailto:municipalclerk@townshipofthenorthshore.ca)

Mail:

Township of The North Shore

1385 Highway 17

P.O. Box 108

Algoma Mills, Ontario

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## **Post-Election Report**

Section 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended states the following:

“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.”

The post-election report will be posted on the Township’s website and provided to Council in accordance with Section 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended.