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ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF KINGSVILLE

2022 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

August 10, 2022

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Introduction

The Town of Kingsville is committed to making the 2022 Municipal Election accessible by working to accommodate the needs of electors by removing barriers to vote for persons with disabilities.

The 2022 Election Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the Town's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. The focus of this Plan is to ensure that the election is accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with accessibility needs and to create a positive voting experience.

Legislative Requirements

The Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the Town of Kingsville. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Clerk is required to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with accessibility needs have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2022 Municipal Election.

In addition to our pre-existing accessibility obligations and the Town's current Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* S.O. 1996, Chapter 32, section 12 states:

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.

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.

Development of the Election Accessibility Plan

This plan will address the specific requirements pertaining to accessibility in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election in the Town of Kingsville.

This Plan is a "living" document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities of improvement arise.

During the development process of the initial Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps will be implemented:

1. In consultation with Accessibility Advisory Committee, review proposed Accessibility Plan to substantiate needs are being met.
2. Establish staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voter's needs are to be accommodated whenever possible.
3. Following the Election, submit a report to the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Voting Method – Vote by Mail

Council for the Town of Kingsville has chosen the Vote by Mail method of voting to facilitate the opportunity for electors to cast their vote from anywhere and at any time. The Municipal Office is accessible and barrier free if the elector wishes to drop off their Election Return Envelope in person.

Mail-in-Ballots:

The Town of Kingsville will be conducting the 2022 Municipal Election through the mail-in-ballot process. A Candidate's campaign election material and campaigning is prohibited on any property under the control or ownership of the Town, including, but not limited to, parks and ballot return stations.

Electors can either return the Vote by Mail kit by mail using Canada Post mail, or can return their envelope to the Municipal Office.

On Election Day October 24, 2022, electors can drop off their return envelopes at the following Ballot Return Station locations:

Cottam	Kingsville
Ridgeview Park	Unico Community Centre
124 Fox St, Cottam	37 Beech St, Kingsville
10:00 am to 6:00 pm	10:00 am to 8:00 pm

Prior to confirming each site as a ballot return station, a site inspection was conducted to ensure that each location is accessible.

Ballot Return Stations

The Office of the Town Clerk will undertake the following actions to ensure that Ballot Return Station locations are accessible and barrier free for all electors as required by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*:

- Conduct site visits to inspect each ballot return station location ensuring that the facility has:
 - Barrier free path of travel from the parking lot/sidewalk into the main entrance of the voting location;
 - Barrier free access into the ballot return station room from the main entrance;
 - Barrier free parking with designated accessible parking spaces;
 - Accessible doors with buttons to automatically open doors; and,
 - Adequate lighting.
- Provisions of adequate and appropriate signage to direct voters;
- Meet with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to receive feedback on this Plan;
- Ensure disruption of service or last minute changes to Ballot Return Station locations are posted in real time on:
 - The Town's website and social media; and,
 - At the site of disruption, if applicable.

Voting Assistance

In addition to the Mail-in Ballot, on Voting day, October 24, 2022 persons with disabilities may attend the Unico Community Centre where accessible marking equipment will be provided. Additionally, electors attending the Unico Community Centre on Voting Day will have access to assistive devices and may request the assistance of a designated election official to mark their ballot.

Accessible Vote Tabulator

At the Unico Community Centre location on Voting Day, an accessible ballot marking device will be made available for electors who require assistance. Electors will have the option of selecting one of the Audio Tactile Interface, Sip 'n' Puff or Paddle Buttons to mark their ballot. Once an elector has marked their ballot using an accessible device, the system will print a paper copy of the marked ballot. The ballot will emerge from the printer into a secrecy folder or sleeve to be fed into the tabulator.

Audio Tactile Interface (ATI)

For use with the Accessible Vote Tabulator, the Audio Tactile Interface is a handheld controller with buttons. The buttons are distinctive in colour and shape and each button is marked in braille. The ATI is the quickest and easiest device for voters who can push buttons firmly.

Paddle Buttons

For use with the Accessible Vote Tabulator, the Paddle Buttons are ideal for electors who may have difficulty pushing buttons. Buttons on the paddle can be pushed with either hands or the feet. The elector is able to navigate the ballot and make the selections by pressing the colour coded, distinctively shaped Left (L) and Right ® paddles.

Sip 'n' Puff

For use with the Accessible Vote Tabulator, the Sip 'n' Puff device is a good option for electors who do not have use of their hands or feet. The Elector is able to navigate the ballot and make selections by sipping or puffing on a straw.

Other Assistive Devices

Election staff will make available assistive devices that will aid those with disabilities in marking their ballot. The following aids will be made available to electors:

- Magnifiers for people with low vision
- Pads of paper and pens for people with impaired hearing
- Easy grip pens

Support persons and Service Animals

Persons with accessibility needs may be accompanied by a support person and/or service animal within the Ballot Return Station location. Support persons may mark the ballot for them, or read the ballot aloud subject to taking the prescribed oath administered by an election official. Support persons must take the oath before marking the ballot. If necessary, the support person may also assist the elector in delivering the ballot, in the secrecy folder, to election staff.

Assistance to Candidates

All candidates are provided with a copy of the Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in partnership with the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO).

Information – Alternative Formats

Election information will be made available through a range of mediums and in diverse formats, including:

- Information available in HTML on the Town's website;
- Large print documents (upon request);
- Material in plain/clear language for electors, service providers, candidates and others who may provide assistance to an elector; and,
- Notices posted on community bulletin boards in municipal facilities for public awareness.

Accessibility Training for Election Staff

Accessibility training will be developed and provided to all election staff. All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with

accessibility needs are served in a way that accommodates their needs. Training shall include:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of accessibility needs;
- How to interact with persons with accessibility needs who use assistive devices or require assistance of a service animal or support person;
- How to use voting equipment and supplies in an accessible manner to deliver election services; and,
- Steps to take if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

Post-election Reporting

In accordance with section 12.1 (3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Clerk shall submit a report to council, within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with accessibility needs. The report will be posted on the Town's website in an accessible format.

Feedback

Public feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with accessible needs may be submitted to the Town Clerk through a variety of methods:

- Telephone: 519-733-2305
- E-mail: elections@kingsville.ca
- Mail or in person: 2021 Division Road N, Kingsville, ON N9Y 2Y9

The feedback process 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 services.

Additional Information

The Town of Kingsville's website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent election 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.kingsville.ca.

Please note that the Clerk, at any time, has the right to amend this Plan to facilitate the vote, count the tabulation of the votes and security of the vote. The Clerk's ruling on any interpretation of this document is final.