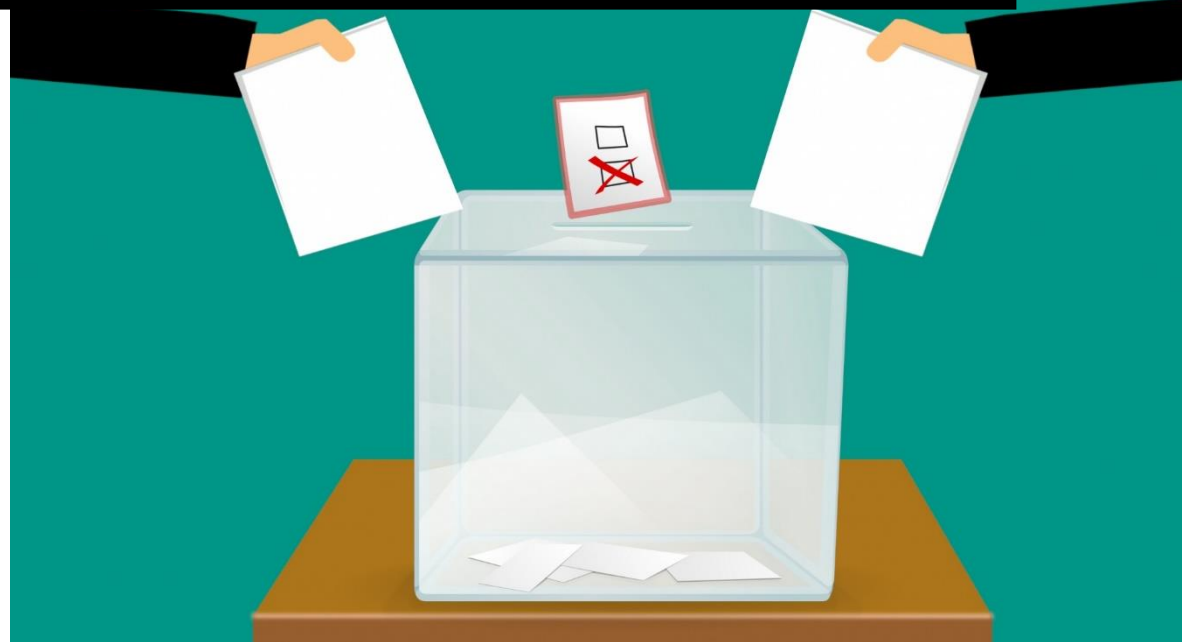


2022

2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan



Created by:

Nathalie Vachon, Municipal Clerk

Table of Contents

Introduction.....2

Objectives.....3

Development of Plan.....3

Voting Location.....4

Proxy Voting.....5

Assistance to Candidates.....6

Communications.....6

Election Feedback.....7

Additional Resources.....8

Appendix “A” – Voting Location Accessibility Checklist

INTRODUCTION

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election in the Township of Fauquier-Strickland.

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. Commitment has been made in the provision of accessible customer service to persons with disabilities. In an effort to ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with core principals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported following the election.

In addition to the Township's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, the following excerpts from the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, SCHED 32*, define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities.

Number and location of voting places

45(1) The Clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c.32, Sched. S,45(1).

Accessibility

45(2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c.33, Sched. 21, s. 8(23).

Plan Re: barriers

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.

Report

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.

Variations for electors with visual impairments

41(3) The Clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996. c/ 32, Sched., s.41(3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30(1).

OBJECTIVES

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Township will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That all voting locations are accessible;
- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection;
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate or election official;
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the community newsletters, media launches, the Township's website and social media (Facebook).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

This Plan is an active document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

During the development process of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps were implemented:

1. The proposed Election Accessibility Plan was reviewed by the Advisory Committee to confirm needs are being met;
2. Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election were established to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voters needs are to be accommodated whenever possible; and
3. Following the Election, a report will be prepared on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

VOTING LOCATION

For the purpose of this plan, Voting Location includes the exterior parking and walkways associated with the location.

In order to ensure that each Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Location Accessibility Checklist will be completed prior to confirming the site as a voting location.

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each voting location has been conducted to ensure that each voting location is accessible to electors with disabilities. The site location accessibility audit checklist is included as Appendix "A" to this document.

Prior to the election, a site map of all advance voting and voting day locations will be made available on the Township's election webpage.

Accessible Route

An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area will be identified with clear and understandable signage.

Parking

Designated parking for electors with disabilities is to be provided in close proximity to the entrance of the Voting Location where possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked and will be on firm and level ground.

Entrance/Exit to the Voting Location

All entrances to the Voting Location will be easy to access and barrier free. Every effort will be made to ensure that the door into the interior Voting Area is wide enough for a wheel chair, scooter, other assistive device or service animal to pass through safely and easily. Should doors into the interior Voting Area not be accessible the doors shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the day.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior Voting Area will be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit and seating will be made available.

Support Persons

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, an Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector with the disability, determine the extent to which he/she needs assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may actually be marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability.

Assistive Personal Equipment

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

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.

Proxy Voting

An elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a Voting Location may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available at Legislative Services and/or the Township's Election webpage. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths, Legislative Services staff can administer the oath (Town Hall, 25 Grzela, Fauquier). Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on the final voting day. On the final voting day, the proxy must be exercised at a Voting location on behalf of the person who is unable to attend. The appointment of a proxy may only be made after 2:00 pm on Nomination Day, August 19th, 2022 and is null and void after the final voting day.

Assistance to Candidates

Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Places and other designated election locations.

Campaign Expenses

In accordance with section 88.20 (8) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, expenses directly related to an individual's disability which would not have been incurred if not for the election, are not subject to the spending limit if they are incurred by a candidate or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Township is required, as per the Accessible Customer Service Standard, to provide a copy of a document to a person with disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account 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 Municipality 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 Municipality or is supplied by a third party, the Municipality 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 Municipality will be provided in a sans serif font, minimum 11 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of temporary accessible service disruption, Election Official will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, the Township will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for electors with disabilities at the Voting Location.

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 and election webpage;
- On Facebook;
- Posted at the site of disruption; and
- Where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

FEEDBACK

The Municipality welcomes customer feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the municipality can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

Comments and feedback can be submitted by any of the following methods:

Telephone: 705-339-2521

In Person or Mail: 20 Doyon Street
PO Box 40
Fauquier, Ontario
P0L 1G0

Email: nvachon@fauquierstrickland.com

Once received, the municipal staff will respond to the candidate or elector directly within 3 business days providing an anticipated action and timeframe for a full response, where appropriate.

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar occurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election information and services.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Legislative Services

Legislative Services staff can answer any questions you may have about running for office, the election in general or specific provision for those persons with disabilities. The Legislative Services Staff for the Township of Fauquier-Strickland are the following:

Nathalie Vachon
Director of Municipal Services/Clerk

Township Election webpage

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland's Election webpage is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election website

This website contains information about municipal elections, the Province of Ontario 2022 Municipal Elections Candidates and Voters Guide as well as the Ministry's commitment to promote greater accessibility for electors and candidates with disabilities.

Service Ontario – e-laws

This website contains all statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

2022 MUNICIPAL ELECTION – VOTING LOCATION REVIEW ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT CHECKLIST

Facility Name: Fauquier Community Centre – Main Hall

Facility Address: 25 Grzela Road

Audit date:

Audit conducted by:

Criteria	Y/N	Comments
Are accessible male and female washrooms?		
Is there a First Aid Kit available on site?		
Is there a telephone available on site?		
Is the facility name or address clearly visible from the street or sidewalk?		
Is the entrance accessible (ramp)?		
Is the ramp well designed and safe?		
Is the door hardware accessible?		
Is the doorway wide enough for a person using a wheelchair or scooter to pass through?		
Is the door easy to open?		
Is the entrance easy to see?		
Is the entrance well lit?		
Is there level access from the entrance to the voting area?		
Is the flooring non-slip, even and level?		
Is the voting location well lit?		
Are there seats available for people to rest is needed?		

Does the voting area have sufficient space for a wheelchair or scooter to move about easily?		
Is a greeter required at this location?		
Is accessible parking available?		
Is the accessible parking space clearly marked with the International symbol of Accessibility?		
Is the parking space firm and level?		
Is the space large enough to meet the needs of an elector who uses a van equipped with a wheelchair lift?		
Is the route to the entrance unobstructed and have continuous, smooth, hard surfaces with no abrupt changes in level?		
Is the route wide enough so someone using a wheelchair, scooter or service animal can travel safely?		
How many accessible parking spots are available?		