



Election Accessibility Plan 2022

City of Timmins 2022 Municipal Election

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Timmins is committed to making municipal elections accessible to all citizens of Timmins, including voters, candidates, employees and volunteers who participate in the election administration.

The City of Timmins's Election Accessibility Plan (EAP) 2022, supports and enhances the City's policies, multi-year Accessibility Plan and its commitment to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to inform voters and candidates how the City's Election Office is preparing to make the 2022 Municipal Election accessible to all voters and candidates.

The focus of the Election Accessibility Plan (EAP) is:

- to ensure that electoral services are accessible to all voters and candidates,
- to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities, and
- to create a positive voting and inclusive experience for all.

The City of Timmins’s Election Accessibility Plan 2022 was developed by members of the Clerk’s election team in consultation with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee. Staff reviewed the relevant legislation and implemented a number of initiatives to ensure compliance.

Policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), the [Ontarians with disabilities Act, 2001](#), and the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) and the [Human Rights Code](#)

The City Clerk’s office will continue to learn, develop and adjust the EAP 2022 in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Following the election, the City Clerk will consult with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify potential areas of improvement and any additional barriers experienced during the election that can be addressed in future plans.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Province of Ontario’s Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (“MEA”) governs elections for all Ontario municipalities. Under the MEA, a clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall take into account the needs of voters and candidates with disabilities.

The clerk is also required to develop a plan on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect voters and candidates with disabilities. This plan must be available to the public before voting day.

Also, the clerk must provide a follow-up report to the public within 90 days after voting day. The MEA also specifically requires the clerk to develop a ballot that allows voters with visual impairments to mark it by themselves. All the while, the MEA also permits a voter with a disability to receive assistance during the voting process.

DEFINITIONS AND BARRIER TYPES

Disability: the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 defines disability as:

- 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, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on 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.

Barrier: means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Attitudinal Barriers: barriers result when people think and act based on false assumptions. Example: receptionist talks to an individual's support person because they assume the individual with a disability will not understand.

Information and Communication Barriers: barriers created when information is offered in a form that suits some, but not all, of the population. Example: print that is too small for some people to read and public address systems that alert only people who can hear the message.

Technology Barriers: barriers occur when technology, or the way it is used, cannot be accessed by people with disabilities. Example: websites that are not accessible to people who are blind and require the use of screen reader software.

Physical and Architectural Barriers: physical barriers or obstacles that make it difficult for some people to easily access a place. Example: a door knob that cannot be turned by a person with limited mobility or strength, or a hallway or door that is too narrow to allow a person who uses a wheelchair to pass through safely.

Organizational Barriers: occur when policies, practices or procedures result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded. Example: a hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities.

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

The City Clerk's office is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons in compliance with the customer service standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. In fulfilling our mission, the City Clerk's office will provide services that respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

ACCESSIBLE VOTING OPTIONS AND TOOLS

Voters of all abilities will be provided with the best possible opportunity to vote freely and independently. The following voting options are available to all voters to assist them with voting in the 2022 Municipal Elections

- Provide voters with the option to vote on-line
- Provide an accessible ballot-marking device for independent voting via "sip-and-puff", the use of paddles, or a tactile device.

- Provide magnifiers, pens and paper at all voting places.
- Provide assistance to voters with disabilities as requested
- Upon request, assist the elector with voting or reading the ballot

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

The City of Timmins Handy Trans will provide transportation services to all its customers. Handy Trans customers can reserve their trip to and from a voting place 7 days in advance. Voting day is October 24, 2022.

ACCESSIBLE VOTING PLACES

Guidelines have been made to make sure that all voting places are accessible to voters and candidates with disabilities. Efforts are made to ensure that a voting place is as central as possible within the voting area it is meant to serve. In selecting a voting place, consideration is also given to factors such as parking, transit, and familiarity for voters. In addition, retirement residences and long-term care facilities have been identified as voting places based on legislation and past practices.

ASSISTANCE TO CANDIDATES

Candidates will be given the opportunity to participate in a Candidate Information where resources will be shared on running accessible campaigns. Topics to be covered include accessible communications, budgeting for accessibility and accessible customer service.

Additionally, as per the City of Timmins's Accessibility Policy, all candidates and voters may request information in accessible format.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

The City of Timmins has considered accessibility in all information and communication strategies for the 2022 Municipal Election.

Information placed on the City's website will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A guidelines.

Information will be communicated through numerous channels, such as the newspaper, website and social media, in an effort to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available.

It is also important to note that the City of Timmins welcomes feedback on the accessibility of the 2022 Municipal Election. This provides the City Clerk with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery, and provide alternative methods of providing election information and services.

The City of Timmins will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services. In the event of disruptions to services or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting locations during the voting period, notices of disruption will be posted in real-time on the City's website, social media pages and issue media advisories where applicable.

The City Clerk welcomes feedback on ways that municipal elections in Timmins can be more accessible. Feedback on the 2022 Accessibility Plan can be submitted through any of the following:

Phone: 705-264-1331

Email: clerks@timmins.ca

Mail: 220 Algonquin Blvd. East, Timmins, ON P4N 1B3