

2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

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1. Introduction

This Plan is for use in the 2022 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Town's current policies with regard to accessibility.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula election will be conducted in a manner that shall ensure that candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services.

This Plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes.

2. Legislative Requirements

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended makes the following provisions with regard to accessibility as it relates to an election.

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 (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 (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.

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 (91).

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

3. Definition of 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 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.

Disabilities can take many forms: visible and invisible, temporary or permanent. Criteria to be considered when seeking to eliminate barriers include:

- Maintaining consistency with the regulations contained in the Municipal Election Act, 1996, as may be amended,
- Required access to electoral services,
- Existing Town policies regarding accessibility,
- Physical limitations with respect to infrastructure, and
- Accessibility legislation (AODA, ODA).

4. Election Material

The 2022 Municipal election will be conducted using the Vote By Telephone and Internet method. Each Elector is mailed a Voter Information Letter which contains the information required by the particular elector to allow them to access their ballot by telephone or internet.

Alternate formats of election materials produced by the Town will be available upon request to those with disabilities.

While it is encouraged, it cannot be guaranteed that all election candidates will provide accessible documentation to electors.

Election staff are available to assist any elector or candidate with a disability. Such assistance may include verbal explanations of election material, assistance in accessing the voting site, completing a form or attending to an elector who has arrived at Town Hall but cannot access the physical building.

Staff will not provide advice on how any elector should vote.

5. Election Activities

Town Hall is the planned location where all election activities will be conducted. While the original Voter Information Letter mailing will be conducted by a third party, all replacement letters and revisions to the Voters List will be conducted from Town Hall.

This location includes the parking lot. The Town Hall location meets the requirements of the Municipal Elections Act as they relate to accessibility. There are marked accessibility parking spaces in the parking lot. There are accessible entrances which include push button door openers. There will be election staff available for assistance at this location throughout the election.

6. Staff Training and Election Assistance

All staff carrying out election duties will be required to complete or must have completed the Accessible Customer Service training and IASR/Human Rights Training.

Election staff will be provided with this Municipal Election Accessibility Plan and will be instructed to accommodate those with disabilities in a manner which meets their individual needs while maintaining the integrity of the election.

Election staff will understand that a service animal and/or support person may accompany an elector at all times.

Election staff will encourage the use of and receive feedback forms from those with disabilities and will furnish those forms to the Clerk. This will assist in the removal of barriers.

Individual election staff who have disabilities will be accommodated to ensure that they are able to perform their duties while having regard for their disability.

7. Accessible Service Disruption

Notice of disruptions in service will be, whenever possible, posted on the door to the facility and on the Town website (www.southbrucepeninsula.com).

8. Candidate Information

Any resources which may be of assistance to candidates with regard to accessibility will be provided in a paper or electronic format or in other format if so required.

Regard will be given to the provision of information which will assist candidates in the provision of accessible documentation to electors.

Resources may also be posted on the Town website (www.southbrucepeninsula.com).

9. Customer Service Feedback

Policy AD.7.1 Accessible Customer Service Policy Required for the Implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was established in 2009. This policy includes a feedback form which is to be used by those who wish to express their concerns with respect to customer service as it relates to accessibility. Policy AD.7.1 is attached to this Plan.

Please provide us with your feedback so we know how to best provide an accessible election. Feedback on this Plan can be submitted through the following channels:

Email: angie.cathrae@southbrucepeninsula.com
Phone: 519-534-1400 ext 122
Fax: 519-534-4862
By Mail: Town of South Bruce Peninsula, PO Box 310, Wiarton ON N0H 2T0
In Person: Town Hall, 315 George Street, Wiarton ON

10. Post-Election Report

In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended from time to time, a report to Council in the appropriate format will be made by the Clerk. The report will be made within 90 days of Voting Day and will outline the successes and challenges of the election as it related to accessibility.

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ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

PURPOSE:

The Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 came into force on January 1, 2008.

This Regulation establishes accessibility standards for customer service and applies to every designated public sector organization and to every other person or organization that provides goods or services to members of the public or other third parties that have at least one employee in Ontario.

This standard is scheduled to come into force on January 1, 2010 for designated public sector organizations and to other providers of goods or services on and after January 1, 2012.

POLICY:

1. Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Provision of said goods or services to persons with disabilities and others will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.
- When communicating with a person with a disability, a provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

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2. Use of Service Animals

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town of South Bruce Peninsula's goods or services.

In this section a "guide dog" means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights' Act and a "service animal" means a service animal for a person with a disability.

For the purposes of this section, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

3. Use of Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

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If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

In this section "support person" means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

4. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a Town of South Bruce Peninsula's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the Town of South Bruce Peninsula and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall give notice of the disruption to the public.

Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the Town of South Bruce Peninsula or by posting it on the Town of South Bruce Peninsula's website or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

5. Training for Staff

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

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- Every person who participates in developing the Town of South Bruce Peninsula's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include the following:

- a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of the Regulation
- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
- how to use equipment or devices available on the Town of South Bruce Peninsula's premises or otherwise provided by the Town of South Bruce Peninsula that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Town of South Bruce Peninsula's goods or services.

The training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.

Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

6. Feedback Process for the Corporation of the Town of South Bruce Peninsula

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.

The feedback process must permit persons to provide their feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise.

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The feedback process must specify the actions that the Town of South Bruce Peninsula is required to take if a complaint is received.

7. Notice of Availability of Documents

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required by this Regulation are available upon request. This notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, by posting it on the Town's website, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

8. Format of Documents

If the Town of South Bruce Peninsula is required by this Regulation to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, it shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.