

Norfolk County

2022 Municipal Election

Accessibility Plan

Contents

Introduction	3
Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended - Legislative Requirements	3
POLICY EBS-54 Corporate Accessibility Policy	4
Definition of Disability	4
Feedback	5
Communications and Information.....	5
Assistance to Candidates.....	6
Voting Places	7
Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities	9
Accessibility Training for Election Officials	11
Post-election Report.....	12
References.....	12

Introduction

This Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the County's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that electoral 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 Corporation of Norfolk County will continue to learn, develop, and adjust our approaches in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The review of accessibility issues and initiatives and addressing barrier prevention or removal is an ongoing practice. This plan will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended - Legislative Requirements

The County Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2018 Municipal Election.

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 (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 (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.

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).

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

POLICY EBS-54 Corporate Accessibility Policy

The Corporation of Norfolk County is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Norfolk County recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. Norfolk County is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. A link to the full corporate accessibility policy is included as a resource at the end of this document.

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, both visible and invisible. The following criteria were considered in the development of this Plan:

- Policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities,
- Access to electoral services must be integrated and equitable,
- Initiatives should address and accommodate a wide range of abilities, and
- The POLICY EBS-54 Corporate Accessibility Policy for providing services to people with disabilities must be followed throughout the election process. A link

to the full corporate accessibility policy is included as a resource at the end of this document.

Feedback

The County Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the County can improve the delivery of an accessible Election. This Plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes. 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:

Phone: 519-426-5870

Fax: 519-426-8573

By Mail: Council Services
50 Colborne Street South
Simcoe, ON
N3Y 4H3

County Clerk:
Teresa Olsen
Phone: 519-426-5870 Ext. 1228
Email: elections@norfolkcounty.ca

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. If you require this information in an alternative format, please let us know.

Communications and Information

Communication and information initiatives ensure election information is accessible and available in alternative formats.

Initiative	Actions
Provide an informative and accessible election web site by: http://www.norfolkcounty.ca/government/2018-municipal-election/	Ensuring election information is available in clear, simple language.
	Continuously updating election information posted on the Norfolk County website to reflect the most recent developments and information.

	Ensuring election web pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level AA Compliant.
	Establishing and continuously updating a dedicated accessibility section on the elections web site that provides information on the initiatives undertaken by the City Clerk's Office.
Provide election information in alternative formats and through multiple channels by:	Sharing information through the Norfolk County website, the Norfolk County Clerk Facebook page and making the information available at the Council Services office located at 50 Colborne Street South, Simcoe.
	Sharing “What to expect when voting” video (provided by Dominion Voting) on the Norfolk County website and Norfolk County Clerk Facebook page.

Assistance to Candidates

Providing candidates with information on how to make their campaigns accessible to the public and providing candidates with election information in accessible and alternative formats.

Initiative	Actions
Provide candidates with information on how to make their campaigns more accessible.	Providing candidates with links to the following provincial publications from the Norfolk County website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Campaign Information and Communication • Accessible Constituency, Riding Association, Central Party and Campaign Offices • Accessible All-Candidates Meetings • Candidates' Guide to Accessible Elections (by AMCTO)

Provide candidates with access to information in alternative formats by:	Ensuring the candidate's guide and/or other relevant publications are available in an accessible format.
Ensure candidate information sessions are accessible by:	Holding candidate information sessions in accessible locations.
	Making accommodations and special services (for example, ASL interpreters) available upon request.

Voting Places

These initiatives cover all aspects of obtaining voting places that are accessible to all (see Appendix 1).

Initiative	Actions
Ensure all voting places are accessible to electors with disabilities by:	<p>Creating an accessibility checklist for election staff to use when conducting site visits of each voting place ensuring each facility has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barrier free path of travel from the parking lot/sidewalk • barrier free parking, where parking was provided • door operators or accessible doors • adequate lighting
	<p>Inspecting all voting places to ensure all locations are accessible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, make modifications to existing voting places to make them accessible, for example, temporary ramps • Places that cannot be made accessible will be relocated or merged with other voting places in the vicinity
	<p>Conduct an additional accessibility check in August/September to ensure there have been no changes to the locations.</p>

	Have election staff perform final accessibility checks during the advance vote and on election day to verify the accessibility of the voting place.
Ensure all voting place access routes and entrances are clearly identified by:	Ensuring there is designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location where parking is available.
	Marking parking spaces clearly with accessibility symbol or sign. Providing appropriate signage at voting places.
	Ensuring electors with accessibility needs are directed to the accessible voting entrance by prominent signage.
	Where possible the accessible entrance is the same as the main entrance.
Ensure all voting place owners and managers are aware of accessibility requirements by:	Notifying all facility owners and managers of the proposed voting places of legislative accessibility requirements in order to prevent last minute changes to voting rooms.
Provide mechanism for feedback on the list of proposed voting places by:	Inviting disability groups and individuals with disabilities to provide feedback on the list of proposed voting places, including Norfolk County's Accessibility Advisory Committee.
	Using the received feedback to ensure that all voting places are accessible to electors, as required by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.
Set up process to facilitate notification of disruptions to service or last minute changes to voting places so that:	In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the advance vote or on election day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the Norfolk County website • on Facebook: Norfolk County Clerk • at the site of the disruption

	When applicable, a media advisory will be issued.
Provide a dedicated contact centre to deal with accessibility issues, concerns or complaints by:	<p>Establishing channels so that an elector with a disability who encounters an accessibility issue can contact election staff:</p> <p>Phone: 519-426-5870 Fax: 519-426-8573 By Mail: Council Services 50 Colborne Street South Simcoe, ON N3Y 4H3</p> <p>Election Coordinator: Elizabeth Harrison Phone: 519-426-5870 Ext. 1222 Email: elections@norfolkcounty.ca</p>

Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities

Various initiatives regarding voting places are used to achieve our goals of a barrier free election.

Initiative	Actions
Provide various accessible voting equipment at all voting opportunities by:	<p>Making accessible voting technology available at voting locations during the advance polling and on election day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio Tactile Interface: The Audio Tactile Interface or ATI is a hand held controller with ten buttons. The buttons on the ATI are described in both colour and shape in the audio instructions and are also printed in braille. The ATI is the quickest and easiest device for voters who can push buttons firmly. • Sip 'n Puff: The Sip 'n' Puff device is a good option for voters who do not have use of their hands or feet. Voters

	<p>control all ballot movement and selections with a sip (inhale) or a puff (exhale) when instructed on the audio track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddle Buttons: Paddle Buttons are ideal for voters who may have difficulty pushing buttons on the ATI. Voters control all ballot movement and selections with the press on the "L" (left) or "R" (right) paddle when instructed on the audio track.
<p>Provide instructions on the use of accessible voting equipment by:</p>	<p>Outstanding?</p>
<p>Welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting places:</p>	<p>Any person with a disability accompanied by a support person or service animal may enter the Council Services office or any voting place with his or her support person or service animal.</p>
<p>Provide assistance to electors with disabilities as required by:</p>	<p>Having an election official in the voting place to assist a voter in casting his/her ballot when requested.</p> <p>Making accommodations for electors with disabilities as required.</p>
<p>Provide for proxy voting:</p>	<p>In cases where an elector is unable to attend a voting place, the elector can appoint another person to act on their behalf.</p>
<p>Provide for curb-side voting:</p>	<p>While all voting places are accessible to all electors, electors with a physical disability can request that the ballot be brought out to their vehicle or to another location within the voting place.</p>
<p>Provide voting opportunities in institutions and retirement homes by:</p>	<p>Establishing voting places at the following facilities in order to allow eligible residents of the facility the opportunity to vote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any institution in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed • a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied

	Having election staff provide for bedside voting where required.
Review ballot design to increase legibility through:	Increase legibility of ballots through use of accessible font styles and sizes, appropriate case usage, and colours, where possible.
	Having note pads and pens available at all voting places to assist communication with electors who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. – should these two cells be one? ^

Accessibility Training for Election Officials

Develop accessibility training and development of reference materials for all election staff.

Initiative	Actions
Ensure all election officials receive accessible customer service training by:	Holding training sessions for election staff on accessibility requirements, serving people with disabilities and on the accommodations and special services available to assist electors. Are there resources provided by the Province or do we need to create content?
Develop reference materials for all election officials highlighting how to serve voters with disabilities by:	Including AODA, customer service standard, and serving people with disabilities messaging in all training materials, classroom training and web based training being provided to all election staff.
	Making individual accommodations available upon request to staff during training, for example, ASL interpretation or communication devices.

Post-election Report

Section 12.1 (2) 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 County Clerk’s post-election report will be posted on the Norfolk County website in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and distributed to disability groups and other stakeholders as requested.

References

[POLICY EBS-54: Corporate Accessibility Policy](#)

Appendix 1

Accessible Voting Locations

Ward	Voting Location	Accessibility Notes
1	South Walsingham Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited site accessibility • Accessible parking provided in gravel parking lot • Entry to building via portable ramp • No automatic door operator at main entrance – doorbell installed to notify Elections staff if assistance is required opening the door • No barrier-free washrooms
	Port Rowan Community Center	Barrier Free Access
	St. Williams Community Center	Barrier Free Access
	Fire Station 8 (Fairground)	Barrier Free Access
2	Courtland Community Center	Barrier Free Access
	Langton Community Center	Barrier Free Access
3	Delhi German Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via ramp on south side of building • Automatic door operator available • Paved accessible parking located on south side of building • Barrier-free washrooms available
	Delhi Friendship Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via West entrance off of William Street • Automatic door operator available • Accessible parking provided in paved parking lot at William Street entrance
	Fire Station 4 (Teeterville)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via main election entrance on South side of building • Accessible parking provided at front of building • No automatic door operator at main entrance – doorbell installed to notify Elections staff if assistance is required opening the door

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I cant recall – were there washrooms available? I had nothing in my notes
4	Vittoria Community Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via main entrance ramp • Accessible parking provided on paved surface close to main building entrance • Barrier-free washrooms available
	Lynnville United Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited site accessibility • Accessible parking signage provided on grass surfacing • No automatic door operators – doorbell installed to notify elections staff if assistance is required opening the door • No barrier-free washrooms on site
5	Emmanuel Bible Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via main entrance • Accessible parking provided in main paved parking lot • Automatic door operators available • Barrier-free washrooms available
	Simcoe Salvation Army Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via main entrance • Accessible parking provided in main paved parking lot • Automatic door operators available • Barrier-free washrooms available
	Simcoe Legion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via ramp at Northwest building entrance • Accessible parking provided at Northwest building entrance in paved lot • Barrier-free washrooms available • Automatic door operators available at Northwest entrance
6	Port Dover Lions Community Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via main entrance ramp • Accessible parking provided on paved surface close to main building entrance • Barrier-free washrooms available • Additional parking at the back

	Grace United Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via main entrance ramp • Elevator is available. • Street Parking available • Barrier-free washrooms available
7	Waterford Legion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via South entrance • Accessible parking provided at South entrance • Barrier-free washrooms available • Automatic door operators available at South entrance
	Villa Nova Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access to building via South entrance • Elevator Available at South entrance • Automatic door operators available at South entrance • Gravel parking lot • Designated Handicap Parking