

## Staff Report

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**Report To:** Accessibility Advisory Committee

**Report From:** Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk

**Meeting Date:** March 26, 2018

**Report Code:** CR-18-048

**Subject:** Election 2018 – Accessibility Plan

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### **Recommendations:**

That in consideration of Staff Report CR-18-048 respecting the Accessibility Plan for the 2018 municipal election, the Accessibility Advisory Committee receives the report for information purposes.

### **Strategic Initiative:**

Support community safety and social inclusion.

### **Background:**

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the "Act"), Section 12.1 (1) places responsibility on the clerk to have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

Section 12.1 (2) of the Act requires that the clerk 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.

### **Analysis**

The draft Accessibility Plan is attached to the report and is being presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee to review and provide feedback.

The draft Accessibility Plan references help centres throughout the municipality. For the 2018 municipal election the help centres will be located at the locations and on the dates listed below:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
City Hall	October 12, 15-19 and October 22, 2018
Royal Canadian Legion	October 13, 2018
Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre	October 14, 2018
Heritage Place Mall	October 20, 2018
Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre	October 21-22, 2018

The City Clerk will use the feedback provided to finalize the Accessibility Plan.

**Financial/Budget Implications:**

None

**Communication Strategy:**

The Accessibility Plan will be posted on the City's website.

**Consultation:**

Deputy Clerk – Legislative

Manager of I.T.

**Attachments:**

1. Draft Accessibility Plan

**Prepared By:** Briana Bloomfield \_\_\_\_\_ signature on file

**Reviewed By:** Kate Allan \_\_\_\_\_ signature on file

**Submitted By:** Wayne Ritchie \_\_\_\_\_ signature on file



ELECTION 2018

[www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca)

City of Owen Sound  
Election Accessibility Plan  
2018 Municipal Elections

This Plan is for use in the 2018 Municipal Election  
in conjunction with the City's current Accessibility Plans and the  
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

## Table of Contents

1.	Introduction .....	3
2.	Staff Training .....	3
3.	Provision of Election Information.....	4
4.	Notice of Temporary Service Disruption .....	4
5.	Staff Assistance .....	4
6.	Assistance to Electors.....	5
7.	Help Centres .....	6
	Parking .....	6
	Entrance .....	6
	Interior .....	6
	Accessible Voting Booth .....	6
	Elevator Access.....	6
	Voting Assistance.....	6
8.	Internet Voting.....	7
9.	Telephone Voting.....	7
10.	Assistance to Candidates .....	7
	General.....	7
	Campaign Expenses .....	8
11.	Feedback .....	8
12.	Additional Information .....	9

## **1. Introduction**

The City Clerk is responsible for the appropriate legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal elections in the City of Owen Sound.

The Municipal Elections Act ('MEA'), Section 12.1 (1) places responsibility on the clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities.

Section 12.1 (2) of the MEA requires that 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.

Owen Sound municipal elections 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, including help centres. The election will be conducted in a manner that ensures that persons with disabilities are able to vote independently and privately with access to voting assistance if required.

Section 12.1 (3) of the MEA requires that within (90) days of voting day the clerk who is responsible for conducting the election shall submit a report to Council regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

## **2. Staff Training**

All staff carrying out election duties will complete the Owen Sound Accessible Customer Service Training and specific Election Training to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are serviced in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Training will include:

- how to interact/communicate with persons with various types of disability;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, require the assistance of a support person or a service animal;
- how to clearly explain internet and telephone voting;

- what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services; and
- how to provide voter assistance if requested.

### **3. Provision of Election Information**

Election information will be provided to electors and candidates with disabilities in an alternative format, agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk.

Notice of the provision of information in an alternative format will be provided on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), and included in the election notices in the local media.

### **4. Notice of Temporary Service Disruption**

The City Clerk shall provide public notice on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), and in the local media if there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services. The notice shall include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

### **5. Staff Assistance**

The Clerk's Office staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Contact information for assistance:

Telephone:	519-376-4440	Ext. 2018
Email:	<a href="mailto:cityadmin@owensound.ca">cityadmin@owensound.ca</a>	
Fax:	519-371-0511	
In Person:	During construction of City Hall:	At City Hall:
	Clerk's Office Suite 22A, Professional Centre 945 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue East Owen Sound, ON	Front Counter 808 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave East Owen Sound, ON
Mail:	City Clerk, City of Owen Sound 808 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave East Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4	

## 6. Assistance to Electors

The 2018 Owen Sound municipal elections will be conducted with internet and telephone voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2018 Internet/Telephone Voting Procedure, available on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), or from the Clerk's Office and can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

Please contact us at 519-376-4440 ext. 2018 or [cityadmin@owensound.ca](mailto:cityadmin@owensound.ca) if you require your Voter Notification Letter in an accessible format.

The Clerk's Office staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

## **7. Help Centres**

Help Centres located throughout the municipality will be available to voters throughout the voting period and on Voting Day until 8:00 p.m. The locations, accessible parking and entrance information will be posted on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca).

### **Parking**

Help Centres will be located in buildings that have private or municipal designated parking for individuals with disabilities.

### **Entrance**

The entrances to Help Centres will be level or have steps and ramps with handrails leading to the entrance doors. Doors will have automatic door opening devices or will be propped open in a safe manner. The doors will be wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility devices.

### **Interior**

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth will be level. Carpeting and doormats will be level with the floor. The voting area will be well lit and seating shall be made available.

### **Accessible Voting Booth**

The voting booth will have a wide area to allow individuals using mobility aids to vote independently and secretly. In the voting booth there will be a large, touchscreen tablet on a stand. If the tablet height needs to be adjusted it can easily be removed from the stand to be held on its own or with assistance.

### **Elevator Access**

At any location where a help centre is not located on the main floor, an accessible elevator will be available.

### **Voting Assistance**

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting booth or the Help Centre staff can assist a voter in casting their vote. The Help Centre staff will, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way to provide the assistance.

Election staff will be on-site at Grey Bruce Health Service – Owen Sound, retirement homes and long-term care facilities during various times in the voting period to increase accessibility. All election officials are sworn to an oath of secrecy.



## **8. Internet Voting**

Internet voting allows voters to vote from their home through secured internet services. This method provides for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy as voters have the option of using the assistive tools they have on their own computer such as paddles, a hand-held touchpad, a thumbswitch or sip and puff technology.

This method of voting is designed to encourage voter participation as voters don't have to attend a physical location to cast their ballot and accessibility and privacy for persons with disabilities is maximized.

The internet election platform will include the capability to change font size and colour scheme.

## **9. Telephone Voting**

Telephone voting allows voters to vote from their home through secured telephone services which provides for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy. Land lines or cell phones can be used to vote and the method is compatible with assistive devices.

Voters can register their vote selections with the telephone keypad or voice commands, greatly increasing accessibility, privacy and independence for voters who do not have internet access.

## **10. Assistance to Candidates**

### **General**

The 2018 Owen Sound municipal elections will be conducted with internet and telephone voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2018 Internet/Telephone Voting Procedure, available on the City's election website, [www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca), or from the Clerk's Office and can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

Please contact us at 519-376-4440 ext. 2018 or [cityadmin@owensound.ca](mailto:cityadmin@owensound.ca) if you require your Voter Notification Letter in an accessible format.

The Clerk's Office staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Accessibility measures for candidates to consider in regards to their campaign messaging are included in the candidate package.

### **Campaign Expenses**

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

## **11. Feedback**

The City Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the City can improve the delivery of an accessible election. This plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes when necessary. Feedback on this plan can be submitted through the following:

Telephone:	519-376-4440	Ext. 2018
Email:	<a href="mailto:cityadmin@owensound.ca">cityadmin@owensound.ca</a>	
Fax:	519-371-0511	
In Person:	During construction of City Hall:	At City Hall:
	Clerk's Office Suite 22A, Professional Centre 945 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue East Owen Sound, ON	Front Counter 808 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave East Owen Sound, ON
Mail:	City Clerk, City of Owen Sound 808 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave East Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4	

## **12. Additional Information**

Owen Sound Accessibility Webpage:

[www.owensound.ca/en/city-hall/accessibility.aspx](http://www.owensound.ca/en/city-hall/accessibility.aspx)

Owen Sound Election Website:

[www.owensoundvotes.ca](http://www.owensoundvotes.ca)