

Township of Huron-Kinloss



2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Mission Statement

To provide all electors and candidates with equal opportunity and to ensure a positive involvement in the electoral process.

Goal

To establish objectives and actions to ensure the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities have been addressed.

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1. Introduction

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the Township of Huron-Kinloss. In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the Municipal Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2022 Municipal Election. Accordingly, the 2022 Municipal Election will be conducted in such a matter to ensure that:

- 1) candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services
- 2) persons with disabilities have full access to the Municipal Office to vote using telephone internet or
- 3) persons with disabilities are able to independently and privately mark their ballot and have access to alternative methods of voting assistance

Within ninety (90) days after Voting Day, the Municipal Clerk will submit a report to Council concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affected electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.

The Township will continue to learn, develop and adjust our approach 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. The policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the Municipal Election Act, 1996 and must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. They will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

2. Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended – Legislative Requirements

The Municipal 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 2022 Township of Huron-Kinloss 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 , 15, s. 11.

41 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some of 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).

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, Schedu.21, s. 8 (23).

52 (1) 4. The deputy returning officer may permit an elector who needs assistance in voting to have such assistance as the deputy returning officer considers necessary.

3. Definition of Disability

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 defines "disability" as follows:

- a) and 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

4. Staff Training and Election Assistance

All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs. Training will include:

- 1) how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- 2) how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- 3) what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that candidates and electors with disabilities are able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that takes into account their disability. The format may be agreed upon between the requester and the Municipal Clerk. In addition, the Municipal website can be accessed using personal assistive technology such as screen readers, magnifiers and other accessible tools.

Provision of Election Information

Candidates and electors with disabilities will be able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that takes into account their disability. The format may be agreed upon between the client and the Municipal Clerk.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, the Municipal Clerk will place a public notice on the municipal website, at the physical site of the disruption and, when possible, in the local media. The notice shall include the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration and a description of alternative methods of delivering the information and/or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information and/or service to persons with disabilities.

Staff Assistance

The Clerk's Office is available to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election and may be reached by way of the contact information provided below:

- | | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| 1) Telephone | 519-395-3735 x 123
519-395-3735 x 124 | Emily Dance, Clerk
Kelly Lush, Deputy Clerk |
| 2) In person | Township of Huron-Kinloss
21 Queen Street
Ripley, ON N0G 2R0 | |
| 3) Fax | 519-395-4107 | |
| 4) Email | edance@huronkinloss.com or klush@huronkinloss.com | |
| 5) Mail | Township of Huron-Kinloss
P.O. Box 130
21 Queen Street
Ripley, ON N0G 2R0 | |

5. Assistance to Candidates

Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the designated election location. Service animals will be permitted in designated voting places.

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.

6. Assistance to Electors

Parking

Designated or reserved parking for people with disabilities shall be provided as close to the entrance of the municipal office as possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly posted and visible from the road and marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility.

Service Animals

Electors requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the Municipal Office to vote.

Entrance to the Municipal Office

The entrance for people with disabilities is sign-posted using the International Symbol of Accessibility. The front entrance door into the Municipal Office is wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter. The double door hardware can be opened manually to allow an oversized scooter into the building.

Assisted Devices

Assisted devices are available on most computers. Go to:

1. All Programs
2. Accessories
3. Ease of Access
4. Click on the accessible tool you may require

Telephone/Internet Voting

The Municipality is offering an opportunity to cast a ballot during the Voting Period from the comfort and convenience of a familiar setting, complete with the tools, equipment and/or software that assist citizens with disabilities in their day to day activities by utilizing the telephone or internet method of voting.

Telephone/internet voting, combined with everyday tools like computers, telephones and other device aids can present opportunities for persons with disabilities to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

An accessible internet can help persons with disabilities to more actively participate in society including the ability to cast a ballot in a municipal election.

The Township of Huron-Kinloss has approved By-law No. 2021-54 being a By-Law to "Authorize the Use of Internet and Telephone Voting as an Alternative Voting Method, for the Township of Huron-Kinloss 2022 Municipal and School Board Election".

Secrecy is the important aspect of a municipal election process and compromising that aspect may hinder voter confidence. All efforts will be taken to ensure secrecy when assisting persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person at the Municipal office in order to complete their voting. In addition, the Clerk/Returning Officer can assist the voter in casting his/her vote. Prior to assisting, the Clerk/Returning Officer shall, in conjunction with the person 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 include actually operating the computer to mark the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. Where a Voting kiosk may be located in an institution or retirement home, the Clerk/Returning Officer can attend to voters in their specific living areas or at their bedside to assist them to vote or Election Officials may be appointed to provide said assistance to these voters. The Deputy Returning Officer and Election Officials are sworn to an oath of secrecy.

7. Feedback Process

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted to Municipal Clerk through a variety of methods including:

- | | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| 1) Telephone | 519-395-3735 x 123
519-395-3735 x 156 | Emily Dance, Clerk
Kelly Lush, Deputy Clerk |
| 2) In person | Township of Huron-Kinloss
21 Queen Street
Ripley, ON N0G 2R0 | |
| 3) Fax | 519-395-4107 | |
| 4) Email | edance@huronkinloss.com or klush@huronkinloss.com | |
| 5) Mail | Township of Huron-Kinloss | |

P.O. Box 130
21 Queen Street
Ripley, ON N0G 2R0

The Customer Service Feedback form is available at the Municipal Office or on the Municipal website at www.huronkinloss.com . If you need a copy or wish to return a completed form, please call Kelly Lush, Deputy Clerk at 519-395-3735 x 124 for further information. Each completed form is reviewed by the Clerk and any action will be responded to in a timely fashion.

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

8. Additional Information

Township of Huron-Kinloss – Clerk’s Office

The Clerk’s Office is located at the Municipal Office, 21 Queen Street, Ripley, Ontario. The Clerk is available to assist and/or answer specific provisions for those persons with disabilities. See Section 7, above, for additional contact information.

The home page of the Township of Huron-Kinloss website at has a link to the “[2022 Municipal Election](#)” webpage which is updated on a regular basis during the election year.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election Website

[This Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election website](#) contains general information about municipal elections, The Province of Ontario 2022 Municipal Elections Candidates Guide and the Ministry’s commitment to promote greater accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities.

Voterlookup.ca

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) has introduced [VoterLookup.ca](#)

a new online service available to eligible electors. Using this service, electors can ensure that their information is correctly recorded for the upcoming municipal and school board elections.

For more information, please contact MPAC at 1 866 296-6722.

Service Ontario e-Laws

The [Service Ontario e-Laws](#) website contains all current statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended, The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.