



The City of North Bay
Election Accessibility Plan 2022



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City of North Bay Accessible Election Plan 2022

Introduction

The City of North Bay is committed to making municipal elections accessible to all citizens of North Bay – including voters, candidates, employees and volunteers who participate in the election administration. The City of North Bay's Accessible Election Plan 2022, supports and enhances the City's policies, multi-year Accessibility Plan and is commitment to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Purpose:

The focus of the Accessible Election Plan 2022 is to:

- a) Ensure that electoral services are accessible to all voters and candidates;
- b) Identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities; and
- c) Create a positive and inclusive voting experience.

Plan Development and Review:

The City of North Bay's Accessible Election Plan 2022 was developed by members of the City Clerk's Elections Team, in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

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](#), [the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#), and [the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#), and respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This Plan is a "living" document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. The City Clerk's Office will continue to learn, develop and adjust the Accessible Election Plan 2022 in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Following the election, the City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk will consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to

identify potential areas of improvement and any additional barriers experienced during the election that may be addressed in future plans. The City Clerk will report to Municipal Council within 90 days following the election on the outcomes and performance of the Accessible Election Plan 2022.

Legislative Requirements – *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended*

The City Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure all voters have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2022 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.
- 12.1(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.
- 11.12.1(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 they consider 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.

Accessible Customer Service

The City Clerk's Office is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons in accordance with the City of North Bay Accessible Customer Service Standards (Appendix "A") and 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.

Definitions:

- (i) 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 architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.
- (ii) 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.

Key Areas of Focus in the Elections Process

The Elections Office has identified the following five key areas of focus within the election process to prevent and remove accessibility barriers:

1. Elections Communication and Information
2. Poll Locations
3. Voting Methods
4. Recruitment and Selection of Election Workers
5. Assistance for Candidates

1. Elections Communication and Information

Provide an informative and accessible election website

- (i) Ensure election information is available in clear, simple language.
- (ii) Continuously update election information posted on the City's website to reflect the most recent information, and temporary disruptions.
- (iii) Ensure election web pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level A compliant.

Provide election information in alternative formats and through multiple channels

- (i) Consult with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee to present information about election accessibility to stakeholder and community organizations.
- (ii) Produce an accessible "How to Vote" video and post it to the City's website.
- (iii) Produce a city-wide mail out about "Voter Look Up.ca" which allows voters to confirm if they are on the voters list.

2. Poll Locations

Ensure all Poll Locations are accessible to voters with disabilities:

- (i) Review and update the Poll Location Accessibility Checklist. A copy of this checklist may be obtained by requesting a copy from the office of the City Clerk, 200 McIntyre Street East, 5th floor, North Bay, Ontario.
- (ii) Review all potential poll locations with consideration for public transit access; provide information to voters on public transit access.
- (iii) Review all potential poll locations for accessibility including two (2) accessible parking spots near the closest entrance to the poll(s).
- (iv) All poll locations to be inspected prior to Voting Day to ensure accessibility for all voters.
- (v) Where possible, the accessible entrance is to be the same as the main entrance.
- (vi) In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of poll locations during the Advance Vote or on Voting Day, notices of disruption will be posted as soon as possible:
 - (a) on the City's website

- (b) Facebook
- (c) Twitter
- (d) at the site of the disruption

When applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

Ensure all Poll Locations access routes and entrances are clearly identified

- (i) Ensure voters with accessibility needs are directed to the accessible voting entrance by prominent signage.
- (ii) Use large-print signage at voting places; train election workers to communicate with people who are blind or have low vision. Consult with Accessibility Advisory Committee on best practices.

Ensure all Voting Place staff are aware of accessibility requirements

- (i) Notify all poll location contacts of legislative accessibility requirements in order to prevent last minute changes to voting places.
- (ii) Welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting places. Educate elections staff on appropriate communication with voters and service animals.

Provide a point of contact to deal with accessibility issues, concerns or complaints

- (i) Establish a feedback method so an elector who encounters an accessibility issue can contact a member of the Election Team: by email: vote@cityofnorthbay.ca
- (ii) Use the feedback received to ensure that voting places are accessible to voters, as required by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Provide information on the accessibility features available at each Voting Location

- (i) Provide details of accessibility features available to voters and candidates at Advance Poll locations on the City's website.
- (ii) Provide details of accessibility features available at poll locations on Voting Day on the City's website.

3. Voting Methods

Provide accessible voting opportunities

- (i) On-line (internet) or in-person voting.
- (ii) Provide voters with the option to vote by proxy.
- (iii) Review ballot design to increase legibility; Increase legibility of ballots through use of accessible font styles and sizes, appropriate case usage, and colours, where possible.
- (iv) Provide an accessible ballot-marking device at all advanced polls and at each Super Poll on Election Day for independent voting via the use of paddles, or a tactile device.
- (v) Provide magnifiers, pens and paper at all voting places.

Provide voting opportunities in institutions and long-term care facilities at the following facilities:

- (i) any institution in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed.
- (ii) a long-term care facility in which 50 or more beds are occupied.

Provide assistance to voters with disabilities as requested

- (i) Upon request, provide voters with the opportunity to vote from anywhere at the voting place (including curbside) with assistance from a Deputy Returning Officer.
- (ii) Upon request, assist the elector with voting or reading of ballot.
- (iii) Train Deputy Returning Officers to assist voters with voting process when requested.
- (iv) Enable voters to swear an oath if they are unable to provide the required identification and/or documentation with a signature.

Provide instructions on the use of accessible voting equipment

- (i) Produce videos that outline the voting process and the accessible voting technologies in use for the election. Videos will include accessible elements and captioning. Post the videos on the City's website.
- (ii) Provide pictorial instructions on voting processes at all voting places.
- (iii) Host a media promotion event (September 2022) on voting technology, including accessible voting equipment and processes.

4. Recruitment and Staffing:

- (i) Provide accessibility training to all Voting Day workers who participate in the election.
- (ii) Develop an Accessible Election Procedure Manual providing direction on how the City of North Bay will address the needs of persons with disabilities during the election and distribute the manual during training.
- (iii) Develop accessibility training and reference materials for all elections staff, including:
 - (a) how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
 - (b) how to interact with persons who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
 - (c) how to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services;
 - (d) what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.
- (iii) Require all elections staff and workers to confirm in writing that they have received elections and accessibility training.

Ensure the recruitment process for staff is accessible

- (i) Provide accommodations and special services for interviews, upon request.
- (ii) Ensure the worker's manual and/or other relevant materials are available in an accessible format, upon request.

5. Assistance to Candidates:

Provide candidates with information on how to make their campaign accessible to the public.

- (i) Provide links on the City's website under Additional Resources on the 2022 Election Page to provincial publications, such as:
 - (a) [Accessible Campaign Information and Communication](#)
 - (b) Candidates' Guide to Accessible Elections (by Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario)
- (ii) Provide information to each candidate on how to run an accessible campaign at the time of filing nomination papers.

Provide candidates with access to information in alternative and accessible formats

- (i) Ensure the candidate guide and/or other relevant publications are available in an accessible format, upon request.
- (ii) Provide the City of North Bay Voters' List in an electronic format to candidates, upon request.
- (iii) Provide accommodations and special information services upon request.

Post-Election Report:

Following the election the City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk will review the outcomes of the five key areas of focus within the election process. This analysis and review will consider feedback/consultation of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify potential areas of improvement and any barriers experienced during the election that may be addressed in future plans. The City Clerk will report to Municipal Council within 90 days following the election of the outcomes and performance of the Accessible Election Plan 2022.

The City Clerk's post-election report will be posted on the City's website in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and distributed to disability groups and other stakeholders, upon request.

Feedback:

The City Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes and improvements can be considered and ways in which the City can improve the delivery of an accessible election. The feedback process provides the City Clerk's elections team with an opportunity to carry out corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences; address training needs, enhance service delivery, and offer accessible methods of providing election services.

Please provide us with your feedback so that we can continuously improve the accessibility of North Bay's municipal elections. Feedback can be submitted to the Elections Office through a variety of methods including:

By Mail: 200 McIntyre Street East
North Bay, ON P1B 8Y6

By Email:
vote@cityofnorthbay.ca

By Telephone: [\(705\) 474-0400](tel:(705)474-0400) , X2510 or X2522

Toll Free: [\(800\) 465-1882](tel:(800)465-1882)

(Mon - Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm excluding holidays)

Feedback is reviewed by the City Clerk's elections team who will respond to the candidate or voter directly within two business days, providing an anticipated action and timeframe for a full response where appropriate.

If you require this information in an alternate format, please contact the Elections Office.

Appendix "A"

The Corporation of The City of North Bay

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	APPROVED: MARCH 2, 2009
	COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2009-132
	SUBJECT: ACCESSIBILITY POLICY – CUSTOMER SERVICE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the City of North Bay's obligation to facilitate the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)*, and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service) and addresses the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

DEFINITIONS

"Accessibility standard" means an accessibility standard made by regulation under section 6 of the AODA.

"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 architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

"Blind person" means a person who because of blindness is dependent on a guide dog or white cane.

“Disability” means,

- (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*; (“handicap”).

"Guide dog" means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*.

“Service Animal” – 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

- (a) the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability.

“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.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the City of North Bay is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons served by the Municipality.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:

The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities:

The City of North Bay will use reasonable efforts to ensure its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

The City's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The provision of the City's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods or services and,

Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services.

Service Animals:

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated by the City accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the City will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services. The safety, care and protection of the community at large will take priority over any individual.

If it is not readily apparent the animal is a service animal, the City may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his/her disability. The City may also, or instead, ask for a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

It should be noted it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his/her service animal is kept in control at all times.

Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises.

If it is not readily apparent the support person is required, the City may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons relating to his/her disability.

The City may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its 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.

Where fees for services requiring access by the disabled person to City facilities are advertised or promoted by the City, unless otherwise communicated in advance, the fee charged to a support person accompanying the disabled person will be fifty (50) percent of the value charged to the disabled person. The City may ask, at the time of purchase, the person with the disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons related to his/her disability.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

Temporary disruptions in City services or facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the City's control or knowledge.

The City will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

If the disruption is anticipated, the City will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption.

The City will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the City's website (www.cityofnorthbay.ca), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

Feedback Process

Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvement.

The public can provide feedback to the City on the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities:

by mail addressed to:

City Clerk
P.O. Box 360,
City of North Bay, ON P1B 8H8

by telephone: (705) 474-0400
in person at: City Clerk's Office, 5th Floor City Hall
or by email to: Cathy.Conrad@cityofnorthbay.ca

Feedback will not be acted upon unless the person providing same includes his or her name, mailing address and daytime telephone number. E-mail addresses are not sufficient.

The City will strive to provide responses to feedback within ten (10) business days from its receipt. Information about the feedback process will be posted on the City's website ([The City of North Bay website](#)) and/or in other appropriate locations.

Assistive Devices

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the City has determined the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. In these situations and others, the City may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures of assistance in obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services, where the City has such other measures available.

It should be noted, it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his/her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Training

All City employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the City and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness Training within six months of beginning their duties.

The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his/her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

Contractors and agents providing services on behalf of the City to the public will be required to ensure staff has received the appropriate training.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon the individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the City's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The City will keep records of the training provided, including dates training is provided and the number of persons trained.

Accessibility Awareness Training will include the following:

- How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- The process for people to provide feedback to the City about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the City responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person to access goods and services;
- Information on other City policies, practices, and procedures dealing with the AODA;
- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to use equipment or devices available on City premises or provided by The City that may help with the provision of goods and services; and
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing City's goods and services.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This policy comes into effect on January 1, 2010.

"Appendix B"

