

# THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WOLLASTON

## BY-LAW # 10-2022

### Being a By-Law to Establish and Adopt an Election Accessibility Plan

**WHEREAS** pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, s. 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; and

**WHEREAS** a municipality may, by By-Law adopt such a plan with respect to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that effect any candidates with disabilities.

**NOW THEREFORE** The Council of the Township of Wollaston does hereby enact as follows:

1. **That** any policy of the Township of Wollaston approved, adopted, or amended by Municipal Council on a day prior to the day this By-Law is in force and effect, pertaining to Election Accessibility Plan is hereby revoked.
2. **That** the Township of Wollaston 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan attached hereto as Schedule "A" of this By-Law is hereby adopted.
3. **That** within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the Clerk shall report to Council about the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that effect electors and candidates with disabilities.
4. **That** both the Plan and the Report must be made available to the public.
5. **That** this By-Law shall come into force and take effect immediately upon the passing thereof.

PASSED THIS 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2022.

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**MAYOR: LYNN KRUGER**

**SEAL**

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**CLERK: BERNICE CROCKER**



# **The Corporation of the Township of Wollaston**

## **2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election in the Township of Wollaston.

The Township of Wollaston has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. In an effort to ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005**, this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported to Council following the election.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

This plan is intended to highlight measures that Township of Wollaston will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates.

These objectives include:

- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection.
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote, and for eligible candidates.
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate, or election official.
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, media launches, the Township of Wollaston website and social media.
- That the polling location is accessible.

## 3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

This Plan is a “living” document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. In order to develop the plan below, several steps were taken in order to ensure that the statutory requirements were met, and a feasible implementation plan was in place.

During the development of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies, and other supporting materials from AMCTO, neighbouring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, technology suppliers and other various stakeholder groups.

- Establish staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated.

#### **4. VOTING METHODS**

The 2022 Township of Wollaston Municipal Election Staff will be working with Intelivote Systems Inc. to provide e-Voting services to eligible voters. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via telephone or internet during the October 11<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 voting period.

Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can present accessible opportunities for persons with disabilities to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity.

The Intelivote Systems Inc. voting system provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home.

Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation.

Additionally, persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes can now use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

By allowing persons with disabilities to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the voter to vote without any assistance. This provides persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters. If persons with disabilities do require assistance in the voting process, trained Election Officials will be present at the Township of Wollaston Municipal Office at 90 Wollaston Lake Road, Coe Hill, ON throughout the voting period to provide assistance.

##### **4.1 Telephone Voting**

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone, and the toll-free telephone number, date of birth, and PIN number contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot.

Communications barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Barriers may be identified as low volume, use of language that is not clear or plain, and confusing or unorganized menu options.

The Intelivote Systems Inc telephone voting application provides the following:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices.
- Clear, plain language.
- Menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections.
- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized.

## **4.2 Internet Voting**

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their date of birth and PIN and qualifying information, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter.

The Intelivote Systems Inc System has been created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), so that persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting system. It is compliant with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium website principles, which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio.

## **4.3 In-person Voting at Voting Station**

For those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or Internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, municipal elections staff will be available in-person at the Township of Wollaston Municipal Office throughout the voting period from October 11<sup>th</sup> through to October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and on Election Day Monday October 24<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., to provide assistance to voters.

Access to the interior of the building, as well as the voting area shall be level and slip-resistant. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area shall be well lit and seating shall be available. Entrance corridors shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter.

An accessible voting area will be available at each location. These areas shall be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively.

The following location will be open on Election Day, Monday October 24, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.:

Wollaston Township Office, Council Chambers  
90 Wollaston Lake Road,  
\*Internet and telephone only

## **5. VOTING LOCATION**

An accessibility assessment of each location where voting assistance may be available will be conducted. The following considerations are taken into account when determining which location(s) will be used:

### **5.1 Accessible Route**

- The name and /or address of the voting location shall be clearly visible.
- An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location
- The voting area shall be identified with clear and understandable signage.
- Seating areas shall be provided throughout the voting location for individuals needing a rest.

### **5.2 Entrance and Exit**

The route to the entrance of the voting location shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely. Doors into the voting location and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

### **5.3 Parking**

Accessible parking shall be available at all voting locations. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and will be on firm and level ground, close to the entrance of the voting location.

## **6. VOTING ASSISTANCE**

### **6.1 Support Person/Friend of the Voter**

Pursuant to the Township of Wollaston's Accessible Customer Services Policies, Practices and Procedures May 2021 people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any voting location. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

### **6.2 Service Animals**

Pursuant to the Township of Wollaston's Accessible Customer Services Policy May 2021, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal the voting location.

### **6.3 Election Officials**

At the Township of Wollaston Municipal Office, Election Officials are available to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their online ballot. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day.

## **7. COMMUNICATION**

The Township of Wollaston 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Municipal Office and by way of the Township of Wollaston web site [www.wollaston.ca](http://www.wollaston.ca)

Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

Information regarding the accessibility measures provided for the 2022 Municipal Election shall be included in general election advertising as well as in the 2022 Municipal Election Candidates Nomination Package.

### **7.1 Election Materials**

The Township of Wollaston is required, as per the Accessible Customer Service Standard, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.



## **Alternate Formats**

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address the specific needs of a user.

The municipality and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Township of Wollaston, or is supplied by a third party, the municipality will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or will attempt to assist the Elector by providing assistive equipment.

## **General Election Materials**

**Large Print** – Printed material generated by the Township of Wollaston will be provided in Arial font, minimum 11 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

**Website** – Information generated by the Township of Wollaston on the website in relation to the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A and allow for assistive software to be utilized. In addition, website font can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information.

## **7.2 Service Disruptions**

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the municipality's control, temporary service accessible disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary service disruption, Election Officials will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, Township of Wollaston staff shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided in a conspicuous place and manner at the respective location(s) and information shall also be posted on the municipal website. This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with disabilities at the voting place.

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 on the Township of Wollaston website.

## **8. CANDIDATES**

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed in order to ensure that they are fully accessible. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario <https://www.aoda.ca/the-accessibility-directorate-of-ontario/> has released a quick reference document to assist candidates with accessible elections considerations:

- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation - Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Campaign Information and Communication](#)

## **9. REPORTING**

Pursuant to Section 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after voting day, the Clerk for the Township of Wollaston shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.