



2022 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan

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1. Introduction

This Plan is for use in the 2022 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Township's current policies regarding accessibility.

The Township of Billings' election 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.

An Accessible Ballot Box is available in the Municipal Office at 15 Old Mill Road, Kagawong ON POP 1J0 during office hours (Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 4:00pm, Friday 8:30am – 12pm).

If an elector requires assistance to complete the ballot a designated election staff member will be available to assist.

In the event of an emergency the Clerk has the authority to cancel the election.

This Plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes.

2. Legislative Requirements

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended makes the following provisions with regard to accessibility as it relates to an election.

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.

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.

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 (91).

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

3. 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: visible and invisible, temporary, or permanent. Criteria to be considered when seeking to eliminate barriers include:

- Maintaining consistency with the regulations contained in the Municipal Election Act, 1996, as may be amended,
- Required access to electoral services,

- Existing Township policies regarding accessibility,
- Physical limitations with respect to infrastructure, and
- Accessibility legislation (AODA, ODA).

4. Election Material

The 2022 Municipal election will be conducted using the Vote by-Mail method. Each Elector is mailed a Voter Ballot Package which contains the information required by the particular elector to allow them to vote.

Alternate formats of election materials produced by the Township will be available upon request to those with disabilities.

While it is encouraged, it cannot be guaranteed that all election candidates will provide accessible documentation to electors.

Election staff are available to assist any elector or candidate with a disability. Such assistance may include verbal explanations of election material, assistance in accessing the voting site, completing a form or attending to an elector who has arrived at Township Office but cannot access the physical building.

Staff will not provide advice on how any elector should vote.

5. Election Activities

The Municipal Office is the planned location where all election activities will be conducted except for the ballot counting which will be at the Kagawong Park Centre. While the original Voter Ballot Package mailing will be conducted by a third party, all replacement letters and revisions to the Voters List will be conducted from the Municipal Office.

There is a marked accessibility parking space in the parking lot at the municipal office. There will be election staff available for assistance at this location throughout the election.

6. Staff Training and Election Assistance

Key Election staff carrying out election duties will be required to complete or must have completed the Accessible Customer Service training and IASR/Human Rights Training.

Individual election staff who have disabilities will be accommodated to ensure that they are able to perform their duties while having regard for their disability.

7. Accessible Service Disruption

Notice of disruptions in service will be, whenever possible, posted on the door to the municipal office and on the Township website (www.billingstwp.ca).

8. Candidate Information

Any resources which may be of assistance to candidates with regard to accessibility will be provided in a paper or electronic format or in other format if so required.

Regard will be given to the provision of information which will assist candidates in the provision of accessible documentation to electors.

Resources may also be posted on the Township website (www.billingstwp.ca).

9. Customer Service Feedback

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:

Email: tmills@billingstwp.ca

Phone: (705) 282-2611 ext 225

Fax: (705) 282-3199

By Mail: The Township of Billings, PO Box 34, Kagawong, ON P0P 1J0

In Person: The Township of Billings, 15 Old Mill Road, Kagawong, ON

10. Post-Election Report

In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended from time to time, a report to Council in the appropriate format will be made by the Clerk. The report will be made within 90 days of Voting Day and will outline the successes and challenges of the election as it related to accessibility.

The Corporation of the Township of Billings
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan- 2020-2025

Customer Service

The Accessible Customer Service Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires the municipality to provide accessible public services for people with disabilities and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support this requirement.

Outcomes

- An accessible environment that includes ensuring people with disabilities receive quality goods and services in a timely manner, supported by effective policies, procedures, tools and resources that promote accessibility in customer service.

Commitments

Policies and Practices

- Examine and address potential barriers at public spaces.
- Ensure that in the case of planned or unplanned service disruptions, notice is provided, via municipal website, social media and hand delivered notices, explaining the reason for the disruption, estimated duration, and any alternative facilities or services available.
- The municipality's website, social media, email and phone services will be available during all business hours. Payments can be made in a variety of methods including: online bill payments, mailed in cheques, credit card payment over the phone and credit/debit services in person at the municipal office. Digital services will be accessible and result in an improved customer experience.
- Comments and concerns related to accessibility are accepted by email, phone or in person via complaint/suggestion forms (which will be provided by municipal staff). All submitted forms will be reviewed by Staff and Council. Any decision or discussion will be relayed to the complainant/suggestor as per our Municipal Complaint Handling Policy.

Training

- Ensure that all employees continue to complete mandatory accessibility training and other foundational training in-class with the Health and Safety Officer at time of hire.
- Continue to promote training to support the municipality towards achieving excellence in accessible customer service.

Communication

The accessibility standard is to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Outcomes

- Provide enhanced accessibility as it relates to communication supports, formats, and websites and web content.
- Municipal staff have the tools and resources to effectively develop information and communications in accessible formats.

By delivering information and communications in accessible formats to all municipal employees, clients and customers, we can guarantee an effective delivery of services.

As well, the municipality will regularly review compliance and accept suggestions and focus on ways to improve accessibility in information and communications.

Commitments

Standards and Resources

- Develop and update standards and guides for accessible digital, marketing and media content in the municipality.
- Develop, provide and promote resources, using a variety of communications and training formats, including in-person sessions, guides, tutorials and testing methodology and tools (e.g., PowerPoint, Excel, Word, use of PDFs, etc.).
- Develop and update yearly status reports of all progress made with the multi-year Accessibility Plan.

Web Platforms

- Continue to implement the <https://billingstwp.ca/> platform to ensure it is accessible.

Digital Services

- Ensure that digital services are designed with accessibility at its core, striving for all users to have equal access to information and functionality.

Forms

- Ensure all forms on the municipal website are accessible by 2020.
- Add additional forms as requested or as fit.



Notices

- Provide consistent notices on the municipal website, social media, mailed hard copies or via email as requested.