



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BONFIELD

BY-LAW NO. 2022-14

**BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT A MUNICIPAL ELECTION
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN POLICY**

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 affect electors and candidates with disabilities;

NOW THEREFORE, the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Bonfield hereby enacts as follows:

1. THAT the “2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan” policy, attached as Schedule “A” to this by-law and forming part of this by-law, be hereby adopted.
2. THAT this by-law shall take effect on the date of final passing thereof.

**READ A FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD TIME AND FINALLY PASSED THIS
8th DAY OF MARCH 2022.**


MAYOR


CAO/ CLERK

Certified to be a true copy


Auditor



Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Objectives	4
Development of the Plan	4
Voting Location	5
Proxy Voting	7
Assistance to Candidates	7
Voting Method	8
Communications	9
Election Feedback	10
Additional Resources	11
Voting Locations	12
Appendix A – Voting Location Sample Floor Plan	
Appendix B – Voting Location Accessibility Checklist	

INTRODUCTION

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

The Township of Bonfield has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. Commitment has been made in the provision of accessible customer service to persons with disabilities. In an effort to ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with core principals 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 following the election.

In addition to the Township's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, the following excerpts from the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, SCHED 32, define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities:

Number and location of voting places

45 (1) The clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (1).

Accessibility

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

Plan re: barriers

(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.

Report

(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, c. 15, s. 11.

Variations for electors with visual impairments

41 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all 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). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).

OBJECTIVES

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Township will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That all voting locations are accessible;
- 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 on 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's website.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

This Plan is an active document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

During the development process of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps were implemented:

1. Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election were established to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voter's needs are to be accommodated whenever possible; and
2. Following the Election, a report will be prepared on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

VOTING LOCATION

For the purpose of this plan, Voting Location includes the exterior parking and walkways associated with the location.

In order to ensure that each Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Location Accessibility Audit Checklist will be completed prior to confirming the site as a voting location.

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each voting location has been conducted to ensure that each voting location is accessible to electors with disabilities. The site location accessibility audit checklist is included as Appendix "B" to this document.

Prior to the election, a site map of all advance voting and voting day locations will be made available on the Township's website.

Accessible Route

An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area will be identified with clear and understandable signage.

Parking

Designated parking for electors with disabilities is to be provided in close proximity to the entrance of the Voting Location where possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked and will be on firm and level ground. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

Entrance/Exit to the Voting Location

All entrances to the Voting Location will be easy to access and barrier free. Every effort will be made to ensure that the door into the interior Voting Area is wide enough for a wheel chair, scooter, other assistive device or service animal to pass through safely and easily. Should doors into the interior Voting Area not be accessible the doors shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the day.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior Voting Area will be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit and seating will be made available.

Support Persons

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, an Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector 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 actually be marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability.

Assistive Personal Equipment

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

Service Animals

An animal is a Service Animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, for example, a guide dog wearing a harness. Service Animals will be permitted in voting places.

Vision Loss

Each Voting Place will be equipped with magnifying sheets to assist an individual with low vision.

Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss

Each Voting Place will be equipped with a pad of paper and pen to communicate with the hearing impaired if required.

Voting Location Institutions

The Municipal Elections Act requires that on voting day, a voting location shall be provided on the premises of the following:

Voting places in institutions, retirement homes

45 (7) On voting day, a voting place shall be provided on the premises of the following:

An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces;

An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm;

A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (7); 2016, c. 15, s. 34 (2, 3)

Attendance on resident

(8) The deputy returning officer for a voting place described in subsection (7) may attend on an elector who is a resident of the institution or retirement home, to allow him or her to vote. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (8)

Attendance on electors with disabilities

(9) To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a deputy returning officer shall attend on the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place. 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (3).

For the 2022 Municipal Election no such institution locations have been identified

Proxy Voting

An elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a Voting Location may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available at the Clerk's Office and/or from the Township's Election Official. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Clerk's Office staff can administer the oath (Municipal Office, 365 Highway 531, BONFIELD, ON P0H 1E0). Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on the final voting day. On the final voting day, the proxy must be exercised at a Voting location on behalf of the person who is unable to attend. The appointment of a proxy may only be made after 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day, August 19, 2022 and is null and void after the final voting day.

Assistance to Candidates

Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Places and other designated election locations.

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.

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability, are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate.

VOTING METHODS

For the 2022 Municipal Election paper ballots will be the voting method.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Township 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 Township 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 or is supplied by a third party, the Township 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 Material

Large Print – printed material generated by the Township will be provided in a sans serif 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 on the website regarding 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.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary accessible 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, the Township will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

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

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of Voting Locations during the advance vote or on the final voting day, Notices of Disruption will be posted in real time:

- on the Town's website and election website;
- posted at the site of disruption; and
- where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

FEEDBACK

The Township welcomes customer feedback on the Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Township can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

In addition, staff working in Township facilities can complete the feedback form for submission on behalf of a person with a disability. The form may be submitted on line or to the Clerk's office by any other one of the following methods:

Telephone: 705.776.2641

In Person or Mail: Township Municipal Office
365 Highway 531, Bonfield Ontario P0H 1E0

Fax: 705-776-1154

E-mail: cao.clerk@bonfieldtownship.com

Once completed, this form will be forwarded to the Clerk's Office for action. The Clerk's Office staff will respond to the candidate or elector directly within 3 business days providing an anticipated action and timeframe for a full response, where appropriate.

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Clerk's Office

Clerk's Office staff can answer any questions you may have about running for office, the election in general or specific provisions for those persons with disabilities.

Township's website

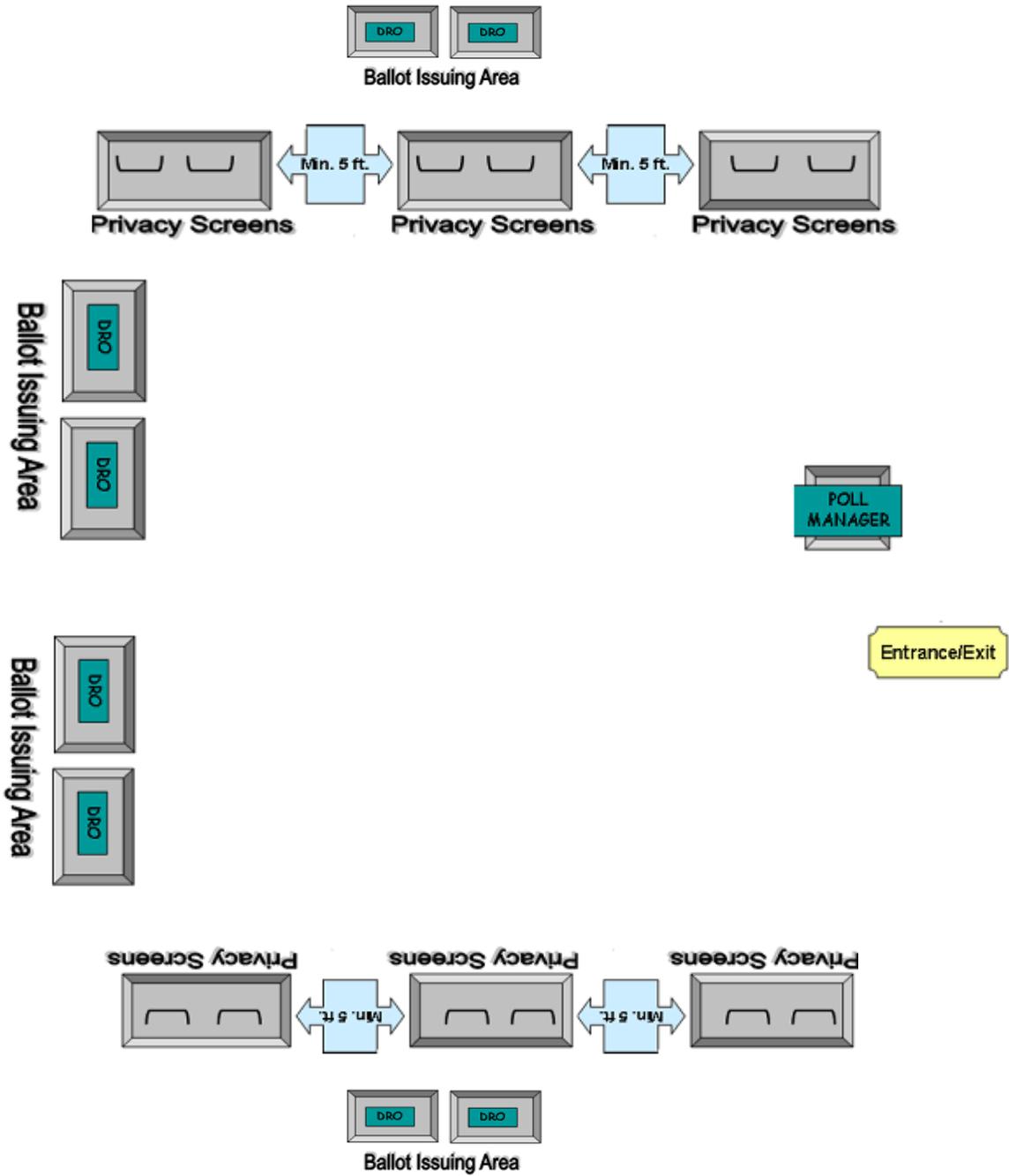
The Township of Bonfield's website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election website

This website contains information about municipal elections, the Province of Ontario 2022 Municipal Elections Candidates and Voters Guide as well as the Ministry's commitment to promote greater accessibility for electors and candidates with disabilities.

Service Ontario – e-Laws

This website contains all current statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.



2022 MUNICIPAL ELECTION – VOTING LOCATION REVIEW ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT CHECKLIST

Facility Name:

Facility Address:

Audit date:

Audit conducted by:

√	Criteria	Y/N	COMMENTS
	ENTRANCE		
	Is the main public entrance a barrier free accessible one? (ext. & int.)		
	If not, is there an alternative entrance that is accessible?		
	Is the entrance well lit?		
	Is the entrance easy to see from the parking area?		
	PARKING LOT		
	Is there accessible parking available?		
	Are the accessible parking spots clearly marked with signs and parked on the pavement?		
	RAMPS - Location		
	Are ramps provided as an alternative to stairs?		
	Is the slope of the ramp 1:20?		
	Are handrails provided on both sides of the ramp?		
	DOORS – Main Entrance		
	Do the doors have a minimum clear width of 860mm (34in) as measured between the door stop and the edge of the door in the 90-degree open position?		
	Are automatic doors provided?		
	If there is NO automatic door: Are lever handles or D-Shaped pulls provided?		
	Are the handles at an appropriate height (mounted between 900mm (35in.)		
	Is there a manoeuvring space of 600mm (24in.) on both sides of the door?		

	Are the widths of corridors, hallways and paths wide enough (min 1.2m/4 ft.)?	
	Is the path of travel free of furniture or equipment?	
	Is adequate headroom height of minimum 2.03m (6 ft. 8in.) provided? (protruding objects)	
	Is there space for wheelchair seating in the auditorium/seating area(s)? (such as arena spectator, pool viewing area)	
	STAIRS - Location	
	Are the stair risers closed in?	
	Is there colour or texture contrasted tread nosing?	
	Handrails are provided on both sides of the stairs?	
	ELEVATORS - Location	
	Do the doors open wide enough to accommodate a person in a wheelchair; at least 915mm (36in)?	
	Do the doors stay open for at least 7 seconds?	
	Are the internal dimensions minimum 1.725m x 1.5 m (5ft 8in x 5ft.)?	
	Are the buttons at an appropriate height (highest button no higher than 1.2m/4ft., lowest button at least 920mm/36in from the floor)?	
	Are the controls or floor buttons raised and done in Braille?	
	WASHROOMS	
	Are accessible stall(s) located within the current washroom facilities?	
	If not, is there an accessible washroom(s) available to both males and females?	
	Please indicate the style of entrance into the washrooms with the accessible stalls : Airport style, Automatic, Push door.	
	Is there a clear turning space of 1.83m (6ft.) in diameter outside the accessible stall ?	
	Is the accessible stall or facility 1.83m x 1.83m (6ft. x 6ft.)?	
	Are grab bars mounted on the wall behind the urinal and on the side wall?	
	Is the toilet flush control automatic or located on the side where the individual would transfer from?	
	Are faucets, fixtures, dispensers and light switches at an appropriate height?	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting a Township of Bonfield facility. We value all our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Let us know how we did in serving you.

Please indicate which Township of Bonfield facility you visited.

- Township Municipal Office
- Public Works Municipal Garage
- Bonfield Public Library
- Recreation Centre
- Fire Department
- Medical Centre

Please tell us the date and time of your visit (yyyy-mm-dd) (hh:mm)

Did we respond to your customer service needs?

- Yes
- No

Was customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

If you answered somewhat or no, please explain below.

Contact Information: Name and telephone number

Email address

Personal information contained on this form is collected pursuant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and will be used to assist the Town in ensuring that the delivery of its goods and services to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer, Municipal Offices, 365 Highway 531, Bonfield ON P0H 1E0 705-776-2641 email cao.clerk@bonfieldtownship.com