



2018 Municipal Election

Accessibility Plan

The policies, procedures and forms described in this document are subject to change at the discretion of the Clerk.

For information or assistance, please contact one of the following:

Kim Bulmer, Clerk
Jennifer Charkavi, Deputy Clerk

613-432-4848, ext. 105
613-432-4848, ext. 104

Main Town Hall Number

613-432-4848

Email
Website

info@renfrew.ca
www.renfrew.ca

Introduction

The Election Accessibility Plan supports fair, full and equal access to electoral services for persons with disabilities.

The principal focus of this plan is to provide appropriate and accessible services to electors, candidates and staff during the 2018 Municipal Election by:

- providing accessible electoral services to electors and candidates
- identifying and eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities
- providing services that respect the dignity and independence of electors with differing abilities
- conducting the election in a manner that ensures that persons with differing abilities are able to vote independently and privately with access to voting assistance if required.
- creating a positive voting experience

The Clerk's Department will continue to learn, develop and adjust our approaches 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. This plan may be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

Municipal Elections Act

The Town 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 2018 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.
- 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.

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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(1).

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.

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

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as amended, (“AODA”), includes the following definitions:

“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 communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice; (“obstacle”)

“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 of 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 *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”)

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 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps have, or will, be taken:

- developing and providing accessibility training to all election officials
- providing information to voters and candidates in an accessible method
- ensuring all voting locations are accessible to electors with differing abilities
- assisting candidates and electors with differing abilities
- continuing to consult with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons with differing abilities to better understand their needs.

Voting Methods

The 2018 Town of Renfrew Municipal Election will be working with Dominion Voting Systems to provide eVoting services to eligible voters. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via telephone or internet during the October 12th - 22nd, 2018 voting period. Voters will also have the choice of voting by composite paper ballot at Advance Polls to be held October 17th and 20th, 2018 and on Election Day, October 22nd, 2018, all at the Town Hall. Those residing in Institutions and Retirement Homes will be provided an opportunity to vote at their place of residence.

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 Dominion 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.

Telephone Voting

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone and the toll-free telephone number. Entering a Voter I.D. and PIN Number contained in their Voter Information Letter, along with Year of Birth, will provide access to an audio ballot.

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The Dominion Voting System telephone application provides the following:

- service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices,
- clear, plain language; and
- menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections.

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 Voter I.D., PIN Number and Year of Birth, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Information Letter.

The Dominion Voting 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.

Free internet service is also being made available at the Renfrew Public Library and the Golden Age Activity Centre for those without means to access the internet.

In-person Voting

For those individuals preferring to vote by the traditional paper ballot method, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, advance voting stations and an Election Day voting station will be open to provide an in-person paper ballot voting opportunity. The voting station will be located at the Town Hall, 127 Raglan Street South, Renfrew.

Accessible Voting Location(s)

In order to ensure that each voting location is accessible to electors with differing abilities, an accessible voting location assessment will be conducted in order to evaluate each voting location. In the case of the 2018 Town of Renfrew Municipal Election, and notwithstanding the institutions and retirement homes, the only voting location will be the Town Hall located at 127 Raglan Street South.

The following considerations are taken into account when determining which location will be used:

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- parking areas
- exterior walkways and ramps
- entrances and hallways
- elevators/stairways (if applicable)
- fire exits
- general layout and services
- public washrooms
- facility signage and information systems

Voting Assistance

At the in-person voting location, upon request, Election Officials are available to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their online or paper ballot. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed and as such take an “Oath of Secrecy” for this purpose.

People with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at the in-person 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.

Individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the in-person voting location.

Communication

The Town of Renfrew 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.

This plan and other information regarding accessibility will be posted on the Town’s website and made available to candidates and third party advertisers upon request.

If a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services occurs, notice will be posted on the Town’s website and in the local media. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and alternative methods of delivering information or service. Every effort will be made to provide alternative methods of delivering the information or service to persons with differing abilities.

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 has released several quick reference documents to assist candidates with accessible elections considerations:

- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation - Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Campaign Information and Communication](#)
- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation - Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Constituency, Riding Association, Central Party and Campaign Offices](#)
- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation - Quick Reference Guide to Accessible All Candidates Meetings](#)

Feedback Process

Your feedback provides an opportunity to take corrective measures to address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services.

The Town welcomes comments to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

Feedback on this Plan may be submitted through the following methods and will be summarized in the post-election accessibility report:

By telephone:	613-432-4848, ext104 or ext105
By email:	info@renfrew.ca
Website:	www.renfrew.ca
In person or by mail:	Clerk's Office, Town Hall 127 Raglan St. S., Renfrew, ON K7V 1P8

Post-Election Report

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

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The post-election report will be posted on the Town's website in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and distributed to other stakeholders on request.