



2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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1. Introduction

The Election's Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the Town's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that electoral services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience.

The Clerks' 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 will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

1.1 Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended - Legislative Requirements

The 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 election.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended states the following:

(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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

.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). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).

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

1.2 Town of Minto Customer Service Policy

The Town of Minto is committed to making our services accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. We comply with the customer service standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

In fulfilling our mission, the Town of Minto will at all times provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We give people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services in the same place, and in a similar way as others. The full customer service policy is attached as Appendix A.

1.3 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, both visible and invisible. 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 and must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities,
- Access to electoral services must be integrated and equitable,

Initiatives should address and accommodate a wide range of abilities, and

- The Town of Minto customer service policy for providing services to people with disabilities must be followed throughout the election process.

2. Feedback

The Clerks' Department welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve the delivery of an accessible Election. This Plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes. 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: annilene@town.minto.on.ca

Phone: 519-338-2511 ext 230

Fax: 519-338-2005

By Mail: Town of Minto

Atten: Annilene McRobb

5941 Highway 89

Harriston, ON N0G 1Z0

If you require this information in a different format, please let us know.

3. Communications and Information

Communication and information initiatives ensure election information is accessible and available in alternative formats

Initiative	Actions
Provide an informative and accessible election web page: http://town.minto.on.ca/departments/cao-clerk/2018-municipal-election	Ensure election information is available in clear, simple language. Continuously updating election information posted on the Town's website to reflect the most recent developments and information.
Provide election information in alternative formats and through multiple channels by:	Produce a How to Vote booklet make the booklet available on-line and at the Town of Minto Municipal Office Post a how to vote by mail video to the webpage Produce a Town wide mail-out that outlines key election information

4. Assistance to Candidates

Providing candidates with information on how to make their campaigns accessible to the public and providing candidates with election information in accessible and alternative formats.

Initiative	Actions
Provide candidates with information on how to make their campaigns more accessible.	Providing candidates with links to the following provincial publications from our Election website: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible Campaign Information and Communication• Accessible All-Candidates Meetings
Provide candidates with access to information in alternative formats by:	Ensure the candidate's guide and/or other relevant publications are available in an accessible format. Making the Town of Minto's voters' list available in an electronic format, free of charge, to candidates.
Ensure candidate information sessions are accessible by:	Holding candidate information sessions in accessible locations. Making accommodations and special services available upon request.

5. Voting Places

These initiatives cover all aspects of obtaining voting places that are accessible to all.

Initiative	Actions
Ensure all voting places are accessible to electors with disabilities by:	<p>Creating an accessibility checklist for election staff to use when conducting site visits of each voting place ensuring each facility has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• barrier free path of travel from the parking lot/sidewalk• barrier free parking, where parking was provided• door operators or accessible doors• adequate lighting <p>Inspecting all voting places to ensure all locations are accessible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where possible, make modifications to existing voting places to make them accessible, for example, temporary ramps• Places that cannot be made accessible will be relocated or merged with other voting places in the vicinity <p>Conduct an additional accessibility check in August/September to ensure there have been no changes to the locations.</p> <p>Having Vote by Mail</p>

6. Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities

Various initiatives regarding voting places are used to achieve our goals of a barrier free election.

Initiative	Actions
Welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting places:	Any person with a disability accompanied by a support person or service animal may enter the Town of Minto Municipal Office or any voting place with his or her support person or service animal.
Provide assistance to electors with disabilities as required by:	Have an election official in the voting place to assist a voter in casting his/her ballot when requested. Make accommodations for electors with disabilities as required.
Provide voting opportunities in institutions and retirement homes by:	Establishing voting places at the following facilities in order to allow eligible residents of the facility the opportunity to vote: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• any institution in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed• a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied Having election staff provide for bedside voting where required.
Review ballot design to increase legibility through:	Increase legibility of ballots through use of accessible font styles and sizes, appropriate case usage, and colours, where possible.
Provide supplies to assist electors with disabilities	Have magnifying sheets available at all voting places to assist electors with low vision. Having note pads and pens available at all voting places to assist communication with electors who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. Having a How to Vote booklet available at all voting places written in plain language and printed in large font.

7. Accessibility Training for Election Officials

Develop accessibility training and development of reference materials for all election staff.

Initiative	Actions
Ensure all election officials receive accessible customer service training by:	Hold training sessions for election staff on accessibility requirements, serving people with disabilities and on the accommodations and special services available to assist electors. Require all staff to sign that they received elections and accessibility training.
Develop reference materials for all election officials highlighting how to serve voters with disabilities by:	Including AODA, customer service standard, and serving people with disabilities messaging in all training materials, classroom training and web based training being provided to all elections staff. Provide every election staff member with the Town of Minto Customer Service Policy. Making individual accommodations available upon request to staff during training.

8. Post-election Report

Section 12.1 (2) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended states the following:

“Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall submit a report to council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.”

The Town Clerk’s post-election report will be posted on the Town’s web site in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and distributed to disability groups and other stakeholders as requested.

Section: Administration	Policy Number: 1.27
Policy: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service	Effective Date: 10/21/2009
Date Last Revised: 02/21/2017	Current Revision Date: 02/21/2017

“Appendix A” of 2018 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan

Customer Service Policy

Intent

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

All goods and services provided by Town of Minto shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Definitions

Assistive Device – Is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – The term disability as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the Ontario Human Rights Code, refers to:

- 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;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Guide Dog – Is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons' Rights Act, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, 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
- If the person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service Dog – As reflected in Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- It is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- The person who requires the dog can provide on request documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person – As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, a 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, medical needs or access to goods and services.

Guidelines

In accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, this policy addresses the following:

- A. [The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;](#)
- B. [The Use of Assistive Devices](#)
- C. [The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs](#)
- D. [The Use of Support Persons](#)
- E. [Notice of Service Disruptions](#)
- F. [Customer Feedback](#)
- G. [Training](#)
- H. [Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents](#)

A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

Town of Minto staff will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
- Allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability.
- Referring to the Accessible Communications Guidelines document

B. The Use of Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by Town of Minto.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the

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customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

Food Service Areas

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog or service dog will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

Other types of service animals are not permitted into food service areas due to the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60.

Exclusion Guidelines

If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below), the Town of Minto will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

Applicable Laws

The Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60, normally does not allow animals in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale. It does allow guide dogs and service dogs to go into places where food is served, sold or offered for sale. However, other types of service animals are not included in this exception.

Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario: If there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (such as pitbulls) and a provision of a by-law passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans on these breeds prevails.

Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, Town of Minto staff may request verification from the customer.

Verification may include:

- Documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- A valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
- A certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Town of Minto staff will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. The Use of Support Persons

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Town of Minto staff will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the customer and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations Town of Minto staff will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

Admission Fees:

If the Town requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons, admission fees for the support person will be waived. In all other instances the support person will be given the option to pay the admission fee.

E. Notice of Disruptions in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Town of Minto. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customer's with disabilities rely on to access or use Town of Minto's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

Notifications will include:

In the event that a Disruption in Service notification form needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable;
- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration; and
- A description of alternative services or options.

Notification Options:

When disruptions occur Town of Minto will provide notice by:

- posting a Disruption in Service form in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and on the Town of Minto website;
- contacting customers with appointments;
- verbally notifying customers when they are making a reservation or appointment; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

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F. Customer Feedback

Town of Minto staff shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers with notice of the process being made available on the Town of Minto website. Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request.

Submitting Feedback:

Customers can submit feedback to:

Matthew Lubbers, Accessibility Coordinator

519.338.2511 ext. 240

matt@town.minto.on.ca

Town of Minto

5941 Highway 89

Harriston, ON NOG 1Z0

Customers who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite customer feedback form or verbally can do so to any Town of Minto employee. Completed forms are to be submitted to the Accessibility Coordinator. The forms will be reviewed by the appropriate Department Head, Accessibility Coordinator and CAO/Clerk.

Customers that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- All employees, volunteers and other members of the Town of Minto.

Training Provisions:

As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- A review of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - use assistive devices;
 - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
 - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.

- Town of Minto's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities including the Accessible Communications Guidelines document.

Training Schedule:

Training will be provided as soon as possible to new employees, volunteers and other members of the Town of Minto.

Refresher training will be provided annually to all employees.

Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

Record of Training:

The Town of Minto will keep a record of training for its staff, volunteers and other members.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

The Town of Minto shall notify customers that the documents related to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information on the Town of Minto's website. Please refer to the Documents Available Notification form.

Acknowledgment, Agreement and Administration

Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

Matthew Lubbers, Accessibility Coordinator

519.338.2511 ext. 240

matt@town.minto.on.ca

Town of Minto

5941 Highway 89

Harriston, ON NOG 1Z0

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes or changes to Town policies and procedures. Forms and other documents of significance noted in this policy include:

- Disruption in Service Notification form
- Customer Feedback form
- Accessible Communications Guidelines document
- Documents Available Notification form

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy of the Town of Minto. Further, I agree to adhere to this policy and will ensure that employees and volunteers working under my direction adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules/procedures outlined in this policy, I may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

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Name:

Signature:

Date: