



**Township of Muskoka Lakes
2018 Municipal Election
Accessibility Plan**

Version: A

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Pursuant to section 12.1 (2) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

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Introduction:

The Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes will continue to make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent in providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons. We will continue to promote an inclusive community that is dedicated to pursuing healthy and balanced lifestyles for everyone.

Objectives:

The 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will ensure that:

- Individuals with disabilities, without exception, are able to independently and privately cast their vote;
- Individuals with disabilities will have full and equal access to all information concerning the 2018 Municipal Election;
- Individuals with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as volunteers, electors and/or candidates; and
- The Township of Muskoka Lakes will make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.

This plan will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

The Township of Muskoka Lakes' 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available through the Township's website. The plan will also be made available in an alternate format, upon request.

Barriers to Accessibility

Disabilities can take many forms and can range from temporary to permanent. Disabilities are predominantly non-visible and no one should ever make assumptions. There are many types of disabilities and their effects can limit an individual's ability to perform everyday tasks.

A "barrier" is anything that stops a person with a disability from fully taking part in society because of that disability. Some barriers and an example illustrating that barrier follow:

Attitudinal Barriers:

- Inaccurate beliefs or perceptions about a person's ability;
- Someone who is abrupt, insensitive, impatient and uncomfortable with people slowed by a physical, language or developmental disability;

Built Environment Barriers:

- Includes building design, shape and dimensions of rooms, width of doorways, stairways, inaccessible bathrooms.
- Additions to an interior or exterior environment such as doors, windows, furniture, planters, hardware, recreational or playground equipment, lighting, signage, use of colour, materials, etc.

Communication Barriers:

- The process of providing or sending, or receiving information such as difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone;
- Someone who speaks too quickly or unclearly;
- Use of language that is not understandable such as the use of complex words or jargon.

Information Barriers:

- Information is not available in an accessible format – large print, audio video, plain language, closed captioned video or computer diskette/data stick;
- Inadequate or incomprehensible signage – font, size, colour, location, or faded.

Systemic Barriers (policies, procedures and practices):

- When practices or policies restrict participation, often done unintentionally;
- Needing to fill out a (complex) form to get a service and not being able to because of a disability.

Technological Barriers:

- When a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices;
- Lack of visual alarms;
- Website is not accessible – no colour contrast or large print options, screen reader, cluttered appearance, difficult to navigate.

Internet and Telephone Voting

The Township of Muskoka Lakes has selected an Internet and Telephone voting method for the 2018 Municipal Election. Votes can be cast commencing Friday, October 12, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. up to Monday, October 22, 2018 at 8:00 p.m. These voting methods will enable electors to cast their votes from anywhere in the world with telephone or internet service. This ensures that all voters have an extensive opportunity to cast their vote using an accessible and convenient method.

The flexibility of Internet and Telephone voting can present opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in the election while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

Should an elector choose to do so, they will have the option of voting at an identified election help centre with the assistance of an Election Official or a support person of their choosing. At the election help centre, the voting method will still be via internet or telephone.

Dominion Internet Voting solution, the vendor selected to operate the election software, supports a minimum of WCAG 2.0 Level A accessibility standards, and also uses

standardized HTML and JavaScript. This allows the internet voting solution to work with common assistive technology software.

The internet voting solution will provide text size options, as well as view options (colour print, black on white print or white on black print).

In addition to the assistive technologies described above the system supports access using a wide variety of web enabled devices. The internet voting system has been tested and functions with various current commercial web browsers and devices including smartphones, tablets and traditional computers.

Voters will be able to vote on a mobile device at the choice of the electorate, at any time within the voting period. This will be particularly beneficial for voters with mobility disabilities that may encounter difficulty travelling to a traditional polling station. Voters will also be able to use any devices/ software that they already own and are familiar with on their computer or mobile device in order to cast their vote.

Telephone Voting

Telephone voting allows voters to cast their votes using any point-to-point telephone connection. Electors will receive a Voter Information Letter containing instructions on how to dial in to access the system as well as how to navigate the audio ballot.

Voter Information Letter

Voter information letters will be mailed out to every eligible elector recorded on the voters' list with complete information prior to the start of the voting period. The letter will contain information how to vote as well as a unique PIN allowing the voter to cast their vote online or via telephone. This letter shall meet accessibility requirements by including the following features:

- Use of black text on white paper to achieve optimum colour contrast;

- Minimal use of italics or underlining;
- Left-aligned text;
- Minimum printed using 11 point in Helvetica Font.

Voter Information Letter in Alternate Formats

A voter may request their voter information letter be produced in an alternate format. The Clerk or designate will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. Final determination as to which accessible format or communication support used resides with the Clerk.

If an alternate format is requested, please note that the time it will take to receive the letter will vary depending on the format agreed upon.

Election Help Centre

In order to ensure that the election help centre is accessible to all electors, a site audit (Appendix A) will be completed prior to completing the set up and orientation layout. Every effort will be made to ensure that the identified election help centre is as accessible as possible. The site audit will assess the following:

- Exterior Paths of Travel
- Parking
- Entrances
- Fire Safety
- Emergency Preparedness
- Signage
- Accessible Washrooms
- Noise
- Lighting

Support Persons and Service Animals

Appointed Election Officials will be available to assist any voter who is unable to cast their vote or may have difficulty with reading or writing after the completion of the Oral Oath at Election Help Centre Form. All Election Officials will review this plan and undertake required training with respect to providing accessible customer service to individuals with disabilities.

If Electors do not wish to seek assistance from Election Officials, electors are also permitted to be accompanied by a support person. A designated support person and/or a friend of the elector will be administered an oral oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

Electors requiring the assistance of a service animal are permitted to bring the service animal into all areas of the election help centre.

Unexpected Service Interruptions

Pursuant to section 6 and Appendix A of the Township of Muskoka Lakes Accessible Customer Service Policy (Policy C-GG-21), in the event of an unexpected service interruption, notice will be provided (where applicable) as quickly as possible.

Election Feedback:

As outlined in the Accessible Customer Service Policy, should a member of the public wish to provide feedback regarding Election accessibility they can do so:

- In person to the Clerk, or designate;
- By telephone: 705-765-3156, extension 211;
- By Fax: 705-765-6755;
- By E-mail: vote@muskokalakes.ca;
- By completing the Township of Muskoka Lakes' Accessibility Customer Feedback Form;
- In writing to the attention of: Cheryl Mortimer, Clerk, 1 Bailey Street, Port Carling, Ontario, ON, P0B 1J0

Reporting:

In accordance with section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 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.

Additional Information:

Further information relating to accessibility can be found on the Township of Muskoka Lakes website at: www.muskokalakes.ca.

Appendix “A”: Election Help Centre Site Audit

Section 1: Facility Contact Information		
Facility Name	Room Name	Date of Audit
Facility Address		
Facility Booking Contact	Telephone Number	Email
Alternate Contact	Telephone Number	Email
Facility Maintenance Contact	Telephone Number	Email

Section 2: Facility Exterior		
Parking		
Number of Parking Lot Spaces	Number of On Street Parking Spaces	Total Number of Accessible Parking Spaces
External Lighting (Y/N)		Is lighting on a timer? (Y/N)

Accessibility Checklist	Y/N	Additional Comments
Is the name of the facility clearly visible at all entry points?		
Are there accessible pathways leading to all entrances of the facility?		
Are the entrance(s) to the facility free of potential barriers? (Such as garbage cans, signs etc.)		
Are the routes to the facility entrance(s) clear, continuous and has a smooth hard surface?		

Accessibility Checklist	Y/N	Additional Comments
Are the routes wide enough for individuals using a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or service animal to travel safely?		
Is the facility accessible by public transit?		
Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked with signage displaying the international symbol of accessibility?		
Do adjacent sidewalks have curb cuts?		
Are there ramps to access the building?		
Is there enough space to accommodate an individual who uses a vehicle with a wheelchair lift?		
Is there an automatic door opener at every entrance to the facility?		
Are the automatic doors in good working order?		
Are the doorways wide enough for an individual in a wheelchair or scooter to pass through? Minimum is 36 inches.		
Are the elevators (if any) large enough to accommodate at least one individual in a wheelchair?		
Are there accessible public washrooms?		
Is there clear directional signage to guide individuals to Election Help Centre?		

Election Help Centre Site Audit conducted by the following:

Name

Name

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

Appendix “B” Election Help Centre Diagram

TO BE DETERMINED UPON COMPLETION OF SITE AUDIT