



2022 Municipal Election

Accessibility Plan

City of Thunder Bay Accessibility Plan 2022 Municipal Election

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City of Thunder Bay Accessibility Plan 2022 Municipal Election

1. INTRODUCTION

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election in the City of Thunder Bay.

The City of Thunder Bay has made great efforts in moving towards a barrier free community. In an effort to ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the City of Thunder Bay's Multi Year Accessibility Plan and 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 to Council following the election.

2. OBJECTIVES

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

- 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 City of Thunder Bay Election Website, social media and by contacting the Municipal Elections Office.
- That all polling locations and Voter Help Centres are accessible.
- That all Elections staff are trained in providing accessible customer service and that they recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated.

3. 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.

4. VOTING METHODS

In addition to in-person voting, the 2022 Municipal Election will use internet voting during the voting period, October 5 – October 24, 2022.

By allowing persons with disabilities to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the voter to vote without any assistance. This provides persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters. If persons with disabilities do require assistance in the voting process, trained Election Officials will be present at designated in-person Polling Locations throughout the voting period.

4.1 Drive-thru Voting

Eligible voters may use a drive-thru polling station in 2022 by visiting the designated polling location in a vehicle. There will be an opportunity for individuals to register their vote via paper ballot without leaving their vehicle. Drive-thru polling stations will mirror in person voting with the added convenience of not leaving a vehicle.

Voters may attend the drive-thru voting location on the following date:

October 18, 2022
12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thunder Bay Community Auditorium
1 Paul Shaffer Drive, Thunder Bay
Paper Voting Opportunity

4.2 Internet Voting

Internet voting 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.

Everyday tools like computers, smart phones, tablets 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.

To vote online, eligible voters will require their PIN and qualifying information, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter. Their date of birth will also be required to be entered.

The Dominion 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.

4.3 In-person Voting at Voting Locations

For those individuals without means to access voting via internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, designated Advance Voting Locations and Election Day Voting Locations will be open to provide in-person internet voting and/or paper voting opportunities via the ImageCast Accessible Voting Ballot Marker Device.

The ImageCast Accessible Voting Ballot Marker Device offers the following functions for use with an ImageCast Precinct tabulator:

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- Voter is provided a hand-held vote selector device, or paddles device, or sip-and-puff device, and a set of headphones, to navigate through an audio version of the ballot.
- Voter navigates through the ballot via audio instructions.
- Voter selects their ballot choices using the vote selector device.
- When the voter has finished making their ballot selections, the vote choices are read back to the voter via the same audio interface, and the voter has a chance to either confirm or reject the vote confirmation.
- Once the voter is satisfied with their choices and they confirm their vote selections, the paper ballot is marked by the attached printer near the voter. This ballot marked by the printer will be indistinguishable from a ballot marked by hand.
- Once the ballot is marked by the printer, the ballot is fed into the ImageCast Precinct tabulator, just like ballots marked by hand.

Access to the voting locations' interior and voting area shall be level and slip-resistant. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area shall be well lit and seating shall be available. Entrance corridors shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device or service animal.

An accessible voting area will be available at designated voting locations. These areas shall be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair, scooter, assistive device or service animal to vote independently and secretively.

Voters may attend any voting location throughout the Advance Voting Period. The City of Thunder Bay will be operating the following voting locations during the Advance Voting Period:

October 5 – 6, 2022
10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
West Thunder Community Centre
915 Edward Street South, Thunder Bay
Internet and Paper Voting Opportunities

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October 12 – 13, 2022
10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre
700 River Street, Thunder Bay

Internet and Paper Voting Opportunities

The following voting locations will be open on Election Day, Monday October 24, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.:

Please refer to Attachment “A” for the list of voting locations on October 24, 2022.

4.4 Special Voting Provisions

Election staff shall visit sites, including long-term care facilities and retirement homes, to set-up on-site voting kiosks, or bedside voting opportunities for residents.

5. VOTING LOCATIONS

An accessibility assessment of each physical polling location will be conducted. The following considerations are taken into account when determining which location(s) will be used:

5.1 Accessible Route

Proximity of the voting location to accessible public transit routes shall be considered in the selection of voting locations. The name and/or address of the voting location shall be clearly visible. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area shall be identified with clear and understandable signage. Seating areas shall be provided throughout the voting location for individuals needing a rest.

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5.2 Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the voting location shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely. Doors into the voting location and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

5.3 Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at all voting locations. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and will be on firm and level ground, close to the entrance of the voting location.

5.4 Transit Pass

Voters will have the opportunity for a ride at no cost on Advance Voting Days (October 5 – 6 and October 12 – 13, 2022) and on Voting Day (October 24, 2022). All voting cards will include a free transit pass for voters to use on the above noted dates in order to access a polling station. The transit pass will be valid on Thunder Bay Transit and Lift+ specialized transit.

6. VOTING ASSISTANCE

6.1 Support Person/Friend of the Voter

Pursuant to the City of Thunder Bay Accessible Customer Service Policy, people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any voting location. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' will be administered an oral oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

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6.2 Service Animals

Pursuant to the City of Thunder Bay Accessible Customer Service Policy, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

6.3 Election Officials

At in-person voting locations, 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 as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to Voting Day.

6.4 Proxy Voting

A registered voter may appoint another person to be their proxy and cast their vote on their behalf. Both voters must be registered in the same municipality and entitled to vote. A voter may only appoint one proxy or act as a proxy for one person unless the proxy is appointed to a spouse, sibling, parent, child, grandparent or grandchild. More information about appointing a proxy can be found in procedure OCC-03- 10 Proxy Voting, or by contacting the Municipal Elections Office

7. COMMUNICATION

The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Office of the City Clerk, 3rd Floor of City Hall, 500 Donald Street, East, Thunder Bay and by way of the City of Thunder Bay Election Website at www.tbayvotes.ca. Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

Information regarding the accessibility measures provided for the 2022 Municipal Election shall be included in the 2022 Municipal Election Nomination/Candidate's Package.

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7.1 Election Materials

The City of Thunder Bay 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.

7.1.1 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 City of Thunder Bay 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 City of Thunder Bay or is supplied by a third party, the City of Thunder Bay 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.

7.1.2 General Election Materials

Large Print – Printed material generated by the City of Thunder Bay will be provided in a Arial 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 City of Thunder Bay on the website in relation to 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.

7.2 Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the City of Thunder Bay, temporary service disruptions may be experienced.

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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 City of Thunder Bay shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided in a conspicuous place and manner at the respective location(s) and information shall also be posted on the City of Thunder Bay website. This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

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

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the advance vote or on Election Day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time on the City of Thunder Bay Election website and City website.

8. 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](#)

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- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation - Quick Reference Guide to Accessible All Candidates Meetings](#)

Staff in the Elections Office for the City of Thunder Bay will also be available by appointment for candidates should there be a request for accommodation to review materials or to provide them in another format.

9. REPORTING

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

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**ATTACHMENT A
List of 2022 In-Person Voting Locations**

POLLING SUBDIVISION	VOTING LOCATION FOR 2022
101 Current River	Current River Community Centre 450 Dewe Avenue
102 Current River	North End Community Centre 954 Huron Avenue
201 Red River	Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre 700 River Street
202 Red River	Algonquin Avenue Public School 160 Algonquin Avenue South
301 McKellar	Oliver Road Community Centre 563 Oliver Road
302 McKellar	CLE Heritage Building 425 Northern Avenue
401 McIntyre	North McIntyre Rec Centre 2051 Government Road
402 McIntyre	Woodcrest Public School 867 Woodcrest Road
501 Northwood	Kinsmen Youth Centre 609 James Street North
502 Northwood	École Elsie MacGill Public School 130 Churchill Drive West
601 Westfort	Kingsway Park Public School 315 Empire Avenue
602 Westfort	West Thunder Community Centre 915 Edward Street South
701 Neebing	West Arthur Community Centre 1914 Arthur Street West

List updated August 9, 2022