

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH GLENGARRY



2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Section 12.1(2) of the Municipal Elections Act (the Act), 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. In May of 2018, an Accessibility Plan was developed for the Township of South Glengarry 2018 Municipal Election and was posted to the Township's website for public viewing.

Section 12.1(3) of the Act states that 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. This document will address the specific measures taken by the Township of South Glengarry to ensure a barrier-free election consistent with the principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

OBJECTIVES

The Township of South Glengarry's Accessibility Plan was intended to highlight measures to be taken to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates.

VOTING METHODS

The Township of South Glengarry offered three (3) different methods of voting for the 2018 municipal election. Two methods, Internet and telephone voting, provided voters with the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere during the voting period.

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.

Persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes had the opportunity to use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

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.

Telephone Voting

The Intelivote telephone voting application provided the following services, addressing potential barriers:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones;
- Offering service in two languages (English and French);
- Ability to adjust volume; and
- Clear, plain language.

Internet Voting

The Intelivote Internet voting application met the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), so that persons with disabilities could perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting system. It was 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.

VOTING LOCATION

The Township of South Glengarry also offered voting by paper ballot at the Township Office located at 6 Oak Street, Lancaster. This addressed potential barriers of electors who did not have means to access voting via telephone or Internet as well as those who required the assistance of a trained Election Official.

Trained Election Officials completed an Accessibility Barriers Checklist multiple times daily. A copy of the Accessibility Barriers Checklist is attached as Appendix A. The checklist addressed such items as:

- Ensuring the address and signage outside the building is clearly visible;
- Ensure automatic doors are functioning;
- Ensure accessibility ramp and doorway is clear of obstructions;
- Ensure seating areas are available and accessible;
- Regularly complete accessibility checks.

An accessible voting area was set up within the Voter Help Centre with a wide area for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and privacy shields were set up to allow for secrecy in voting. Additionally, the accessible voting areas had magnifying glasses available to assist voters who may have experienced difficulty reading the font size of the paper ballots.

VOTING ASSISTANCE

Pursuant to the Township's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, people with disabilities were permitted to be accompanied by a support person at the Voter Help Centre.

Upon request, Election Officials assisted any voter who requested and consented to assistance in casting their ballots. All individuals working in the capacity of Election Official were all formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to assisting voters.

Report Prepared by:

Kelli Campeau, Clerk

December 17, 2018