

Township of Scugog

Accessible Election Plan

2022 Municipal Election



The Township of Scugog is committed to making the 2022 Municipal Election accessible by working to accommodate the needs of its electors through effective procedures and processes.

Introduction

The Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the Township of Scugog. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* as amended; *the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*; and *the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities will have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2022 Municipal Election. As such, the 2022 Municipal Election will be conducted in such a manner to ensure that:

- Have regard for the needs of electors, candidates and election officers with disabilities
- Ensure that voting places are accessible to persons with disabilities
- Prepare accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers that could affect electors and candidates with disabilities, and make the plan available to the public prior to voting day
- Publish a report about the identification, removal and prevention of election barriers that affect persons with disabilities within 90 days after Voting Day

Objectives

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

- That all Voter Assistance Centre locations are accessible
- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection, and that assistance is available if desired
- 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, election officer, or registered third-party advertiser

This document is available in alternate format upon request.
Please contact the Clerk's Department at clerks@scugog.ca or 905-985-7346.

- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, election communications, the Town's website, and social media.

Alternative Voting Method

Under Section 42 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, Council authorized **By-law 31-21**, allowing for the use of an alternative voting method and the use of vote-counting equipment such as optical scanning vote tabulators.

The two methods of voting in the 2022 Municipal Elections are traditional paper ballots cast in-person at an advanced voting location or internet voting from anywhere, anytime. An Advanced Voting Period will take place from October 17, 2022 to October 23, 2022.

Traditional In-Person Paper Ballot Voting will be available at certain designated voting locations during the advanced voting period. Dates and times will be specified later.

Internet voting will be continuously available during the Advanced Voting Period and on Voting Day. Internet voting is a complement to traditional paper ballots and voters will have the ability to cast their ballots online from anywhere during the voting period from their personal smart phone, computer, or tablet.

Internet Voting

Online voting is accessible across a variety of devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers and allows voters with the capability and convenience to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates a voting process for persons with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation to access a physical voting location or voter assistance centre. Additionally, persons who have assistive devices can use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

Assistance to Candidates

- **Campaign Expenses** – Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.
- **Guide to Accessible Elections** – All candidates will be provided with a copy of the Candidate’s Guide to Accessible Elections produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in partnership with the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasures of Ontario (AMCTO).

Assistive Devices & Service Animals

Election staff will make available assistive devices that will aid those with disabilities in casting their paper ballot. The following aids will be made available to electors at the Advanced Voting Locations:

- Magnifiers for people with low vision
- Pads of paper and pens for people with impaired hearing

Persons requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the Advanced Voting Locations as well as at all Voter Assistance Centres.

Voting Locations

Municipal Office

The Township of Scugog Municipal Office is the main location where all election services will be provided and will act as a Voter Assistance Centre.

The Municipal Office is a barrier-free facility with accessible entrances for persons with mobility impairments. There is one clearly marked, barrier-free parking space on Perry Street in front of the Municipal Office with adequate curb cuts allowing access to the main floor entrance and two clearly marked barrier-free parking spaces in the parking lot adjacent to the Municipal Office, accessed from North Street. Both entrances to the building are equipped with marked automatic door openers and the doors are wide enough to accommodate wheelchair or scooter traffic. The Voter Assistance Centre is located on the main floor with level access from both entrances. The corridors are kept clear and floors are even and hard surfaced and any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor. A designated barrier-free private area with adequate lighting and

seating with a suitably low writing surface will be made available should a person choose to cast their ballot.

Scugog Community Recreation Complex (SCRC)

The Meeting Room at the SCRC will be used as an Advanced Voting Place as well as a Voter Assistance Centre.

The SCRC is a barrier free facility with accessible entrances for mobility impairments. The front entrance is equipped with wide doors that automatically open and can accommodate wheelchair or scooter traffic; the rear entrance is equipped with a marked automatic door opener. There are accessible parking spaces at the front and rear of the building. The Voter Assistance Centre is located on the main floor with access from both entrances, including a ramp at the front lobby. The corridors are kept clear and the floors are even and hard surfaced. The meeting room is large and barrier free with suitable lighting and seating. The washrooms are accessible.

Greenbank Centennial Hall

The Greenbank Centennial Hall will be used as an Advanced Voting Place as well as a Voter Assistance Centre.

The Greenbank Centennial Hall is equipped with an elevator for access to the main area where the Voter Assistance Centre is located. The floor surface is kept clear and the surface is even and hard surfaced and any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor. The hall is large and barrier free with suitable lighting and seating. There is an accessible washroom available.

Blackstock Recreation Complex (BRC) Meeting Room

The Meeting Room at the Blackstock Recreation Complex will be used as an Advanced Voting Place as well as a Voter Assistance Centre.

The BRC is a barrier free facility with an accessible front entrance for mobility impairments. The front entrance is equipped with a marked automatic door opener and can accommodate wheelchair or scooter traffic. There is accessible parking spaces at the front and side of the building. The Voter Assistance Centre is located on the main floor with access from the front entrance. The corridors are kept clear and the floors are even and hard surfaced. The meeting room is large and barrier free with suitable lighting and seating. There is an accessible washroom large enough to accommodate a wheelchair.

Scugog Island Community Hall

The Scugog Island Community Hall will be used as an Advanced Voting Place as well as a Voter Assistance Centre.

The Scugog Island Community Hall has a separate front entrance equipped with a ramp for accessible access to the building which will accommodate a wheelchair or scooter. The Voter Assistance Centre is located on the main level with access from the front entrance. The floor surface is kept clear and is hard surfaced. There is suitable lighting and seating and the washroom is accessible and large enough to accommodate a wheelchair.

Assistance to Electors with Disabilities

Through the use of internet voting, the Township of Scugog is able to facilitate the opportunity for electors to cast their ballot by various means and for extended periods of time during the voting period. Should an elector choose to cast their ballot at the Township of Scugog Municipal Office the Township will endeavor to ensure the process is accessible to those persons with a disability.

Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities who require assistance completing their ballot via internet may either attend a Voter Assistance Centre or request a home visit through the Clerk's Office. Election staff will consult with the elector to determine whether they prefer a home visit or the use of assistive transportation to attend the Voter Assistance Centre. The last day to contact the Municipal Office to request a home visit or arrange for assistive transportation is Wednesday, October 19, 2022.

Home Visit

If a home visit is requested, two election staff will attend at the elector's home. Confirmation will be made that the elector is on the Voters' List and in the event that the elector's name is not on the list, the appropriate form will be completed on-site by election staff.

The elector will be offered the opportunity to complete the ballot on their own, or to receive assistance from election staff with the casting of their ballot via the internet.

Traditional In-Person Paper Ballot Voting will not be permitted at home visits.

Assistive Transportation to a Voter Assistance Centre or Advanced Voting Location

If an elector faces a mobility disability and cannot attend a Voter Assistance Centre or Advanced Voting Location without assistance, election staff will facilitate transportation arrangements to Voter Assistance Centre or Advanced Voting Location. In consultation with the elector, election staff will assist the elector in arranging for an accessible taxicab or Durham Region Transit (DRT) Specialized Services if the elector has prequalified for the DRT service.

Assistance from Election Staff

Election staff at the Voter Assistance Centre, Advanced Voting Location or attending a home visit may assist an elector by casting the ballot or reading the ballot aloud. Election staff shall work with the person with the disability to determine the extent to which assistance is needed and the best way in which this assistance can be provided.

Note: All Deputy Returning Officers appointed by the Clerk are required to take an oath, stating their commitment to confidentiality and that he/she will cast the ballot as directed by the voter (if the voter requests this type of assistance).

Support Persons

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voter Assistance Centre or Advanced Voting Location who may cast the ballot for them or read the ballot aloud. There are no prescribed oaths to be taken by support persons. In addition, the Clerk or designated Election Official can also assist a voter in completing their ballot. In this instance, prior to entering the designated area, the person with the disability and the Clerk or designated Election Official will determine the extent to which assistance is needed and the best way it may be provided. This may include casting the ballot as directed by the elector, if requested. All Election Officials are required to swear an oath of secrecy.

Retirement and Nursing Homes

Following MPAC's enumeration period, election staff will contact the administrators of retirement and nursing homes to ensure the accuracy of the Voters' List at these institutions. If inaccuracies are identified, election staff will work with the administrator to make the corrections.

In consultation with retirement and nursing home administrators, election staff will determine a day and time to attend the residence to provide voting assistance to residents. Notices of the date and time will be posted in the residence and will be provided with sufficient notice to be added to calendars that may be maintained by the home for residents. If deemed necessary, Deputy Returning Officers may provide voting assistance to residents in their specific living areas or at their bedside.

Information to Electors – Alternative Formats

Election information will be made available through a range of channels and in diverse formats, including:

- Information available in large print (upon request) and also available on the Municipal website in downloadable format.
- Material in plain/clear language for electors, service providers, and others who may be providing assistance.
- Notices will be posted on community bulletin boards in municipal and private facilities.

Election Staff Training

Election staff will be trained in accordance with the Township of Scugog Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy. All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs. Training will include:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
3. How to use voting equipment and supplies in an accessible manner to deliver election services

4. What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, the Clerk's Office shall provide public notice on the Township's election website, at the physical site of the disruption and when possible, in the local media. The notice shall include the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration and a description of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

Feedback

Public feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted to the Clerk's Office through a variety of methods.

Telephone: 905-985-7346

In Person: Municipal Office, 181 Perry Street, Port Perry

Fax: 905-985-9914

E-mail: election@scugog.ca

Mail: Clerk's Office, 181 Perry Street, P.O. Box 780, Port Perry, ON L9L 1A7

One method of submitting feedback is to complete the Customer Service Initial Complaint and Feedback Form located on the Township's website at [Township of Scugog Website - Feedback Form](#). This form can be completed and forwarded to the Clerk's Office for action. In addition, staff working in Township facilities can complete the form and submit the feedback on behalf of the persons with a disability. Each completed form is reviewed by Township staff who will respond directly to the candidate or elector within two business days, providing an anticipated action and timeframe for a full response where appropriate.

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery, and provide alternative methods of providing election services.

Scugog Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Scugog Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted on the Accessible Election Plan and requested to provide comments and feedback. Any comments or feedback received will be incorporated where practical into this place.

Reporting

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Clerk will submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that will affect electors and candidates with disabilities within 90 days after the conduct of the election

Additional Information

The Township of Scugog's website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent election developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year at [Township of Scugog Election Page](#).

Please note that the Clerk, at any time, has the right to amend this plan to facilitate the vote, count and tabulation of the votes, and security of the vote.

The Clerk's ruling on any interpretation of this document is final.