



2022 Municipal and School Board Election Accessibility Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Clerk shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with varying abilities. The Town of Collingwood is committed to ensuring that all qualified electors have the opportunity to vote. Offering multiple methods of voting provides the most accessible access to the electoral process.

The Town of Collingwood will be utilizing the internet and traditional paper ballots as the voting methods for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election.

Internet Voting eliminates the need for electors to attend a voting location and provides for an extended period to participate in the election process, at any time of the day and from anywhere.

The use of paper ballots during the advance vote dates will be done at locations that are fully accessible to electors if they choose this method over Internet Voting. In addition to the traditional ballot, an Electronic Ballot Marking Device will also be available at designated voting locations. This device allows eligible electors with variable abilities the option of voting independently by way of an audio ballot using an Audio Tactile Interface, Sip and Puff or Paddle Button interface and headphones to produce a computer rendered marked paper ballot identifying the Voters preferred Candidates.

INTERNET BALLOT VOTING

Voters will be able to use a device of their choosing, whether it is a smart phone, computer or tablet with access to the internet to be able to cast a digital ballot. To access the voting system, registered voters will receive a Voter Information Letter in the mail which will contain the website required to access the ballot, along with a Voter ID number and PIN which is unique to each voter.

Voters with varying abilities will be able to access software available on their personal devices, such as sip and puff, assisted hearing devices, audio readers, etc. that they are accustomed to when voting, making it a comfortable and familiar environment for the voter. The accessibility settings on the internet system for a smart phone, tablet or computer enable the user to display larger or bold text, reverse the font from black on white to white on black, and adjust the contrast for voters with visual disabilities.

Should a voter not have access to the internet, tablets will be available for use at on Advance Vote Dates and Election Day at the Voter Help Centre to be located at the Collingwood Public Library, 55 Ste. Marie Street, Collingwood. A touch screen voting unit, such as a tablet, permits individuals to vote by tapping a box next to the candidate's name on the screen, without having to maneuver a mouse or handle a keyboard.

TRADITIONAL PAPER BALLOT VOTING WITH TABULATOR SUPPORT

In addition to Internet Voting, Voters will have the opportunity to vote in a 'traditional' manner with paper ballots. A Voter Help Centre will be located at the Collingwood Public Library, 55 Ste Marie Street, Collingwood at the following dates and times:

Advance Vote Dates

October 8, 2022	10:00 am to 3:00 pm
October 12, 2022	3:00 pm to 8:00 pm
October 15, 2022	10:00 am to 3:00 pm
October 19, 2022	3:00 pm to 8:00 pm
October 22, 2022	10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Election Day

October 24, 2022	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
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Paper Ballots will be scanned by Tabulators to ensure secure, accurate and efficient vote counting.

One of the tabulators will be equipped with accessibility enhancements allowing eligible electors with variable abilities the option of voting independently by way of an audio ballot using an Audio Tactile Interface, Sip and Puff or Paddle Button interface and headphones to produce a computer rendered marked paper ballot identifying the Voters preferred Candidates. As this device takes additional time to vote, it is strongly encouraged to arrange a time prior to Election Day by contacting the Town at 705-445-1030 ext. 3800.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#), the following provisions will be met by the Town of Collingwood:

- Provide accessible customer service training for all elections staff
- Provide opportunity for feedback to barriers a voter may encounter
- Allow for the use of service animals and support persons
- Provide notice of temporary disruptions of service when applicable
- Provide documents in alternate format that consider a person's disability

Making Provisions for Support Persons

A support person may assist a voter by marking their ballot or reading the ballot aloud to them pending the prescribed oaths have been taken.

Election Staff

The election staff assisting with the 2022 municipal election are employees of the municipality. As a municipal employee, the Town is required to provide training to meet accessible customer service standards. Staff are trained to provide a voter with the appropriate options available when required. Staff maintain a friendly and approachable demeanour throughout the election, assisting electors in any way possible.

Candidates

Candidates are provided with resources to encourage their campaigns are made accessible to voters.

Making it convenient

Online and in-person voter registration

The Town of Collingwood has implemented an online voter registration portal which allows a potential voter to see if they are on the voters' list for the upcoming election or to apply to be added to the voters' list wherever it is convenient for them, pending access to the internet. This allows them to register anytime, anywhere at their convenience.

The Town of Collingwood has also strived to be at various events and locations throughout the municipality to register voters in person. Voters will be able to register at the Town Hall during regular business hours and at the Help Centre provided at the Collingwood Public Library during Advance Vote Dates and on Election Day. Opportunity to register to vote will also be provided at the Collingwood Farmers Market of September 10 and October 8. The Town may organize other voter registration locations as staff resources and time permits.

Voter Help Centre

To accommodate those voters that prefer a "polling station" type atmosphere when voting, or that may require some assistance in voting, the Town of Collingwood will be offering a stationary Voter Help Centre at the Collingwood Public Library during Advance Vote Dates and Election Day where devices with access to the Internet will be made available in addition to the traditional paper ballot and an electronic ballot marking device.

What makes touch screen voting accessible?

At any time during the voting experience, election staff will be available to assist electors when necessary. All election staff at the Voter Help Centre will be trained on the voting devices and will be required to take an Oath of Secrecy prior to assisting a voter in voting upon consent of the voter. The accessibility settings on a tablet such as an iPad enables the user to display larger or bold text, edit contrast, and use 3D Touch to magnify sections for voters with visual disabilities. Touch screens do not require the use of a mouse or keyboard.

Accessible Features - Voter Help Centre

The Voter Help Centre located in the Collingwood Public Library provides the following accessibility features:

- Automatic door openers as you enter the building from the parking lot or Ste. Marie Street and traverse to the voting location contained within the Library
- Door handles with a lever style allowing for ease of opening
- Two accessible public washrooms
- Service animals and support persons are permitted in the library facility
- Accessible parking in the adjacent parking lot. Additional accessible parking spaces may be added if required
- Flush curb adjacent to parking area
- A wheelchair available for use in the library (request for use upon arrival at the front desk)
- Public transit stop located adjacent to the library, with free transit (bus) being offered on Election Day
- An elevator is available to access the third floor of the library where the Voter Help Centre will be located

In addition to the above features, magnifying sheets will be available for those voters with low vision to better view the Voter Information Letters required to access the ballot and traditional ballots offered on Advance Vote Dates and Election Day.

Roving Voter Help Centres

The Town of Collingwood will be hosting roving Voter Help Centres. Election staff will attend all long-term care and retirement homes in Collingwood to ensure eligible voters residing at these facilities are given the opportunity to vote. Residents that did not receive a Voter Information Letter in the mail will be provided with one in person, upon proof of personal identity and voter eligibility.

Should a voter not be able to leave their home, election staff may go directly to their home during the advance voting period prior to 24 October upon request to assist them in voting. This is solely dependent on staff availability.

Communications and Information

Election notices and general information for candidates and electors will be provided in a variety of formats including radio, newspaper, the Town's website, Twitter, Facebook, Town Hall and other municipal facilities and event as deemed appropriate. Instructional videos will be posted to the Town of Collingwood website upon availability.

"Have a Question" is available on the municipal election EngageCollingwood site: <https://engage.collingwood.ca/2022-municipal-and-school-board-elections> to allow candidates and electors the opportunity to ask questions and submit comments or concerns with respect to the election.

A copy of the [Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections](#) produced jointly by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Province, was provided to all candidates upon nomination and links to the guide and other related information are provided on the municipal election website:

https://www.collingwood.ca/sites/default/files/docs/government/amcto_candidates_guide_to_accessible_elections_2021_version.pdf

Radio advertising is used to inform the electorate of the election, deadlines, and voting methods available to them and where to go for information and questions.

Contact Us

For questions related to this document for the election in general, please contact Clerk Services, Town of Collingwood at:

Town Hall - 97 Hurontario Street, Collingwood, ON

Phone: 705-445-1030 ext. 3800

Email: election@collingwood.ca