



Town of Parry Sound

2010 Municipal Election

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Mission Statement

To provide all electors and candidates with equal opportunity and to ensure a positive involvement in the electoral process.

Goal

To establish objectives and actions to ensure the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities have been addressed.

References:

Town of Parry Sound Accessible Customer Service Policy:

The Town of Parry Sound is committed to providing quality goods and services to all persons regardless of their ability. Goods and services will be delivered in a way that preserves the dignity and independence of all persons regardless of their ability.

The provision of goods and services will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary whether on a temporary or permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.

All persons, regardless of their abilities will have equal opportunity, within reason, to access and benefit from the goods and services provided by the municipality.

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, Amended:

“A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities.”

OBJECTIVES

1. Review:

Review election process to establish actions to provide accountability and ensure accessibility initiatives are implemented.

Consultation will take place with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons with disabilities to ensure goals and actions are relevant and effective.

Actions		Comments	
1.	The accessibility initiatives to be provided to the Regional Disability Advisory Council (RDAC) for review and comment	Provided to RDAC on June 18, 2010	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Parry Sound's Accessibility Coordinator to provide comments and recommendations on methods to meet accessibility needs	Consulted with Accessibility Coordinator on various dates in April, May and June 2010	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Communications and Information

Ensure communication initiatives and information for candidates and electors are available in alternate formats.

Actions		Comments	
1.	Post all information to town website	Permits access to text only information and review in variable formats in accordance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

		with Parry Sound's communication policy. <i>On going throughout 2010</i>	
2.	Provide access to: <u>Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections</u> , produced jointly by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Province; the <u>Provincial Accessibility website</u> ; <u>Ministry of Community and Social Services, Making Ontario Accessible</u> ; the <u>Town's Election Information</u> ; <u>Guide to Accessible Campaign Information and Communication</u> ; <u>Guide to Accessible Campaign Offices</u> ; <u>Guide to Accessible All Candidates Meetings</u> ; <u>MCSS Training Directorate</u>	Permits access to information in searchable formats.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Establish a method dedicated to receiving feedback on accessibility initiatives	In place. Comments can be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator by telephone, fax, e-mail, in person or in writing in accordance with Parry Sound's customer feedback policy e-mail: accessibility@townofparrysound.com on-line form: www.townofparrysound.com/residents/accessibility/customerservicefeedback In person: Town of Parry Sound, Parry Sound Mall, 70 Joseph Street	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

		In writing: Town of Parry Sound, 52 Seguin Street, Parry Sound, Ontario P2A 1B4 Telephone: (705)-746-2101 Fax: (705) 746-7461	
4.	Provide all documentation and forms in large.	To be available upon request in accordance with Parry Sound's Communications Policy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Enlist assistance of assistive groups to broadcast election information to members. Parry Sound Community Living, The Friends, Belvedere Heights, Lakeland Long Term Care, RISE and RDAC to be approached.	To assist in educating electors of the voting options available to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Provide candidates and election staff with information relating to accessible customer service.	Accessible Customer Service Best Practices Handbook to be provided to every election worker and to be made available electronically for all registered candidates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.	Provide candidates with supplementary information to ensure a positive campaign for both candidates and electors.	AMCTO's Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections – link to this document provided to candidates (in addition to any other information relating to accessibility).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Candidate 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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Voting Locations

Ensure all voting locations/facilities are physically accessible.

Actions		Comments	
1.	Create an accessibility checklist with input from the Regional Disability Advisory Council (RDAC), for election personnel to use when conducting site visits of each voting location.	Checklist completed ensuring each facility to be used has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door operators/accessible doors • Barrier free parking • Accessible ramps and thresholds • A barrier free path of travel from the parking lot • Adequate lighting 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Conduct site visits of all potential voting locations to ensure full accessibility. Parking lots and paths to be considered a part of the voting location. Nancy Hall of RDAC to be contacted to assist with checklist.	Site visits to be completed June 2010.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Run a trial set up voting location to determine maximum accessibility.	With the assistance of Parry Sound's Accessibility Co-ordinator, a mock voting location will be set up to determine maximum accessibility (i.e. distance between voting booths, height of tables, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Ensure that the sole voting location on voting day has accessible voting	Advanced voting locations accessible and main voting location on voting day will have	<input type="checkbox"/>

	equipment, in addition to being physically accessible.	accessible voting equipment as requested.	
5.	Where necessary, merge voting polls to ensure voting provided in accessible facilities.	All voting facilities – Advance Voting and Voting Day will be accessible.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Provide appropriate signage at voting locations.	Ensures voting locations and access areas are clearly identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Service animals and support persons to be permitted in all voting locations as per Parry Sound's Customer Service Policy.	Election staff training to address service animals and support persons. Support persons will be required to take an oral oath of secrecy prior to assisting an individual in the voting process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Set up a process to facilitate notification of any last minute voting location changes, should an emergency occur in accordance with Parry Sound's Disruption of Service Policy..	Information available on web page at http://www.townofparrysound.com/election Link will be set up from Mayor's Corner on the Town website.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	Ensure designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location.	Accessible parking spaces to be clearly marked with the accessibility symbol.	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Voting

Ensure equal opportunity to all electors to vote as independently as possible.

Actions		Comments	
1.	Advertise for accessibility requirements if assistance is required for someone to place their vote. Sound Opportunities, Newspaper, Bulletin Board, next RDAC meeting. Request RDAC provide an enlarged ad for posting.	Provide deadline and then determine what equipment/assistance is required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Assess voting equipment to ensure it meets the needs of the electorate.	Equipment dependant on advertisement that will determine if anyone needs assistance with placing their vote in the 2010 election.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Provide fully accessible equipment/or alternative method at all advance voting locations and at the only location (YMCA) on voting day.	Any type of voting equipment/alternative method will be dependant on the response to an advertisement that will determine who needs assistance with placing their vote in the 2010 election.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Provide instructions on use of accessible voting equipment.	Procedures will be provided on the Town's website and will be available in print at voting locations. Election staff will be trained on use of equipment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Schedule extended advance voting opportunities	3 days of advance voting scheduled and approved by by-law.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Promote advance voting opportunities for	Notice of advance voting and the YMCA	<input type="checkbox"/>

	electors with disabilities.	voting day location to be provided to all transit providers (Parry Sound Taxi, Hammond Transportation) via public notices and newsletters. The Friends, Belvedere Heights, RISE, Lakeland, Community Living and other assistive groups to broadcast election information to their members/ residents/clients. Public Transit and Specialized Transit available on Saturday October 16 th advance poll. Application forms are available at the Town Office for Specialized Transit requirements.	
7.	Provide supplies to enable voting for visually impaired	Magnification screens to be available in all voting locations. Large poster ballots in voting locations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Provide voting opportunities on the premises of long term care facilities	Providing on-site voting for Belvedere Heights and Lakeland facilities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	Add tools to assist with ensuring accessibility as identified.	Use of low and high tables in all voting locations.	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Staff Training

Ensure all Election Officials receive election training which shall incorporate accessible customer service training to provide a positive voting experience.

Actions		Comments	
1.	Staff training will incorporate provisions to meet accessible customer service standards. Municipal Training Policy for Accessible Customer Service.	Training components as noted below. All staff will be required to register completion of Accessibility training for the Town's records.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Provide reference materials	An Accessible Customer Best Practices handbook will be provided to every staff member working on Election 2010.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Training will include:

- a) Completion of AODA training as per Parry Sound Accessible Training Policy.
- b) A requirement to monitor elector's concerns and to ensure that their needs are met, i.e. if an individual with a walker is in a long line, staff are to observe, and if it is felt that the elector is having difficulties, offer a chair and ensure that their place is saved in the voting line-up.
- c) A requirement to ensure that electors are aware that magnifiers are available, if required, throughout the day by routinely advising line-ups that may occur;

- d) Direction for election staff to observe electors during discussions with them, and it appears that the voter is having difficulty understanding, ensuring that the voter is able to clearly see the speaker;
- e) Encouraging election workers to approach an elector if it appears that the elector requires assistance to get around in the voting location. Offer assistance to help, do not assume an individual needs help;
- f) Election staff will be trained to identify a service animal and to follow the town's Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- g) Maintain a friendly and approachable demeanour, regardless of how tired, upset or hassled a worker may feel;
- h) Check the access doors frequently to offer assistance and watch for electors unable to easily enter the building;