



# Municipality of Meaford Accessible Election Plan

## Introduction

The Municipality of Meaford is committed to making municipal elections accessible to all – including voters, candidates, employees and volunteers who participate in the election administration. The Municipality of Meaford’s Accessible Election Plan 2022 supports and enhances the Municipality’s policies, multi-year Accessibility Plan and commitment to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the appropriate legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal election. The Municipal Elections Act (‘MEA’) Section 12.1(1) places responsibility on the Clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities. Section 12.1(2) of the MEA requires that 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.

Section 12.1 (3) of the MEA requires that within (90) days of voting day the clerk who is responsible for conducting the election shall submit a report to Council regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

## Plan Development and Review

The Municipality of Meaford’s Accessible Election Plan 2022 has been developed by members of the Elections Team and Accessibility Coordinator in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and respect the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

## Staff Training

All staff involved in the election will complete the Municipality of Meaford Accessible Customer Service Training and specific Elections Training to recognize and ensure that people with disabilities are accommodated according to individual needs.

## Provision of Election Information

When requested, election information will be provided to electors and candidates with disabilities in an alternative format, agreed upon between the requestor and the Clerk. Requestors can obtain a 'Request for Documentation in Alternative Formats' form from the Accessibility Coordinator.

## Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, the Municipality shall provide public notice on the municipal elections site ([www.meafordvotes.ca](http://www.meafordvotes.ca)), at the physical site of the disruption and when possible, in the local media. The notice shall include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide the information or service to persons with disabilities.

## Feedback

The Municipality of Meaford invites feedback about the accessibility of municipal goods, services and facilities. Feedback relating to accessibility of the election can be provided through the accessibility feedback form found at [www.meaford.ca/accessibility](http://www.meaford.ca/accessibility) or by requesting a paper form from the Accessibility Coordinator.

## Staff Assistance

Legislative Services staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election. For assistance, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator.

## Assistance to Candidates

### Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Location and other designation election locations.

### 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.

## Other Considerations

All communications and resources sent to candidates will be accessible and available in alternate formats upon request. Information will be made available across multiple channels, including the municipal elections website, social media platforms and an email account. Candidates will be provided accessible customer service training resources to promote the municipality's accessibility initiatives, including proxy voting and assistance to electors.

## Assistance to Electors

The 2022 Municipality of Meaford municipal elections will be conducted by vote by mail and in-person voting. Detailed information about the voting methods is outlined in the 2022 Voting Procedures available at [www.meafordvotes.ca](http://www.meafordvotes.ca) or from the Legislative Services department and can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

## Service Animals

Electors requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

## Voting by Proxy

A person with a disability who is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a Voting Location may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available through Legislative Services and on the Municipal election website. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Legislative Services staff can administer this oath at the Administration Office (21 Trowbridge Street West, Meaford). Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on Voting Day. The Municipality of Meaford Election procedures will outline the process and dates relating to voting by proxy.

## Vote By Mail

All eligible electors will be provided with the option to register to vote by mail. In the provision of a vote by mail election, elements of the ballot design will be considered to ensure legibility, through use of accessible fonts, styles and sizes, appropriate case usage and colours, where possible. Plain language will be used in all communication.

## In-person Voting

### Parking

Where possible, designated or reserved parking for individuals with disabilities and seniors is to be provided close to the entrance of the Voting Location. Routine checks of routes to the entrance of the Voting Locations will be conducted throughout the day.

### Entrances

Where Voting Locations have steps up to the entrance, ramps with handrails will be provided to assist people using mobility aids or who have mobility impairments. The slope of the ramp will conform to the barrier-free design requirements of the Ontario Building Code or the Canadian Standards Association Barrier-Free Guidelines. Where the main entrance to the voting station is inaccessible, another entry point that is accessible will be used. Where possible the accessible entrance is to be used as the main entrance for everyone.

Every effort shall be made to ensure that the door into Voting Locations are wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through easily. The door hardware is to be accessible and operated by a person using a closed fist. If the doors are heavy, awkward to open or have handles that are out of reach, where possible they will be propped open in a safe manner or an alternative entrance provided.

### Interior Voting Area

Access to each interior voting area and voting booth shall be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit and seating shall be made available.

### Voting Booth

Accessible voting booths will be available at each Voting Location. Voting booths will be low in height and have a wide area to allow individuals utilizing mobility aids to vote independently and secretively. A large print Notice of Ballot will be displayed in close proximity to the voting booth. Magnifying sheets will be made available to assist any individual with low vision.

## Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Location. In addition, the Voting Location Supervisor can assist the voter in casting his or her vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Voting Location Supervisor shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which he or she needs assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may include actually marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. Where a Voting Location is located in an institution or retirement home, election officials can attend on voters in their specific living areas or at their bedsides to assist them to vote. All election officials are sworn to an oath of secrecy.

## Other Considerations

Elections staff will review other accessibility reports to determine additional measures that can be taken. Other efforts considered include ensuring note pads and pens are available at all voting locations to assist in communicating with electors, referring to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) for direction on clear print guidelines and signage guidelines, and reviewing sites to hold special voting locations.

## Feedback

The Municipality of Meaford invites feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Municipality can improve the delivery of an accessible election. This plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes when necessary.

The Municipality of Meaford accessibility feedback form can be found at [www.meaford.ca/accessibility](http://www.meaford.ca/accessibility), available to provide feedback on this plan and the election.

For a paper copy of the form, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator:

Accessibility Coordinator  
Municipality of Meaford  
[accessibility@meaford.ca](mailto:accessibility@meaford.ca)  
519-538-1060 ext. 1100

Online Feedback Form: [www.meaford.ca/accessibility](http://www.meaford.ca/accessibility)

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

## Additional Information

The Municipality of Meaford's election website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year.

Municipality of Meaford Election Website: [www.meafordvotes.ca](http://www.meafordvotes.ca)

Alternative accessible versions of this document are available upon request

Contact us at [accessibility@meaford.ca](mailto:accessibility@meaford.ca) or 519-538-1060 x 1100.