

2018

The logo for the Township of Strong is a circular emblem. It features a sun rising over a body of water with two lighthouses. The text "INCORPORATED" is at the top, "TOWNSHIP OF STRONG" is in the center, and "TOGETHER FOR A BETTER TOMORROW" is on a banner at the bottom. The year "1877" is at the very bottom.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION

The Corporation of the Township of Strong 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

August 1, 2018

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Introduction

The Corporation of the Township of Strong (Township) 2018 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan (Plan) outlines how the Township will remove barriers and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The Township will ensure that the municipal elections process is accessible for electors and candidates of all abilities. The Plan focuses on identifying and removing barriers and mitigating concerns related to accessibility, so that electors and candidates feel more engaged and are able to fully participate in the election process while ensuring a positive voting experience.

This Plan is a living document which will be updated as new opportunities for improvement arise.

Definition of Disability

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005* (AODA) define disability as:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Mandate

It is the goal of the District to ensure that persons of all abilities are able to participate in the municipal election process.

Further actions that will be considered to remove barriers that may affect electors and candidates with disabilities include:

- Providing candidates with information on how the voting place is accessible; and
- Ensuring candidate information sessions are accessible.

Accessible Customer Service

The Township is committed to making its programs and services accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. It complies with the Customer Service Standard of *the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

All Township staff have or will receive training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and adhere to the Township's Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy (By-Law 2014-022 Schedule A & B), as well as on the Customer Service Standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In fulfilling this training component, the Township will provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Information and Communications

The Township will ensure that information is accessible and available in alternate formats, upon request. When a document is provided to a person with a disability, the Township will make every effort to provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person's disability into account.

The District is committed to website accessibility and will ensure that the Elections page on its website conforms to AODA standards for web content so that information relating to the municipal elections can be easily accessed by electors and candidates.

Employment and Training

For the voting location, the Township will ensure that any recruiting practices for election officials are compliant with the AODA and that training on the IASR and the Human Rights Code, as it pertains to persons with disabilities, has been provided.

The Clerk Administrator and Deputy Clerk for the Township have received the required customer service training and are prepared to serve any candidates and voters with a hearing, sight, or developmental disability; and are aware of their rights to bring a person or animal with them in order to provide additional assistance.

Accessibility training will be provided to the members of Council and Committees once the new Council has been formed.

Accessible Transportation

The Township does not have a public transportation system. If you require assistance with attending the voting location, please contact the Clerk Administrator.

Accessible Facilities

The Township is committed to removing barriers and to ensuring that all its voting facility is accessible as follows:

- Service counter are is large enough to accommodate mobility aids and meet AODA specifications for easy access by electors and candidates.
- Two (2) parking space are available as designated by required signage.
- Building entrances are accessible to candidates or electors with disabilities and appropriate signage will be provided so that information is clear and visible.
- The Council Chambers (Voting Location) has been organized for easy mobility with barrier-free access.

If an accessibility concern is identified, all reasonable measures will be considered to remove the barrier.

Voting Locations and Procedures

The Township has designated the Administration Office Parking Lot and Council Chambers as the Voting Location.

An easily navigable route will be clearly marked with signage for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. There are no stairs along the navigable walkway to the voting area.

Seating areas are provided throughout the voting area for electors needing a rest. Voting booths shall be placed on tables. Election staff are available to assist if you require any assistance in reaching the voting booth. If you require ballots in alternative format (braille, large print, audio) please notify the Clerk Administrator **by August 31, 2018**. If you are bringing a support person to help you, please identify them to the election staff when you register. Your support person will be required to take an oral Oath in order to assist you to vote in a secure manner. If you are bringing a service animal with you, please remember to bring documentation to confirm its service animal status, if this is not readily apparent. Documentation can be a letter signed by a Doctor or a Nurse.

The Township of Strong uses the traditional ballot method of voting. Please read the information below to see how this voting method works!

When you come in to vote, you will be asked to provide your name and appropriate identification (for the list of appropriate ID that you should bring with you, go to: <http://www.strongtownship.com/content/election/election> Once your identity has been confirmed and the offices that you are entitled to vote for are determined, you will be provided with a ballot(s). Your ballot(s) identify the office(s) for which you are entitled to vote. If you require ballots in accessible format (braille, large print, audio) **please notify**

the Clerk Administrator by August 31, 2018. Proceed to the voting booth and mark your ballot with the pen/pencil provided, as shown on the signage at the booth. Magnifying sheets are available. In order to ensure your vote remains secret, your ballot will have to be folded, as shown on the signage/reverse of the ballot, and returned to the election staff desk before it is deposited into the ballot box. Should you have difficulties in folding your ballot, you may return it to the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), face down, and the DRO shall fold the ballot for you in such a manner as to not disclose your vote.

All election staff at the voting location shall be trained on any accessibility and customer service standards, and shall have taken an Oath of Secrecy. At any time during your voting experience, an election official will be available to assist you where necessary.

Legislative Requirements - *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended*

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended states the following:

Section 12.1

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

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

41 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as they consider necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1).

45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

Post-Election Report

As required under section 12.1 (2) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Clerk's Office shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. This report will be made available to the public and in alternate formats, upon request.

Plan Development and Review

The Township's 2018 Municipal Elections Plan was developed by the Clerk Administrator.

This Plan shall be reviewed in the year of a municipal election to ensure conformity with legislative or regulatory accessibility requirements.

Feedback

The Clerk's Office welcomes feedback on the manner in which services are provided to persons with disabilities during the election process. Feedback can be provided by accessing the feedback page on the Township's website (<http://www.strongtownship.com/content/accessibility/accessibility>).