

Recommendation:

That the Clerk's Office-2023-01 report, dated January 17, 2023 regarding the Accessibility Report for the 2022 Municipal Election be received for information.

Report:

It was the goal of the Township of Douro-Dummer to ensure that all electors in the Township who have a disability or an issue with accessibility were provided with the best opportunity to vote as independently as possible in the 2022 Municipal Election.

The Post-Election Accessibility Report will evaluate the accessibility of the services offered to all electors and candidates in the 2022 Municipal Election.

Section 12.1 (3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, requires the Clerk to prepare a report about the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the report available to the public within 90 days after a regular election.

Post-Election Reporting

Accessibility Plan and Elector and Candidate Information

Section 12.1 (2) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, requires the Clerk to prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.

The 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, created March 23, 2022, supported accessible elections and the Township's commitment to the needs of persons with disabilities. The Plan supported electors and candidates to be accompanied by a service animal or support person. A copy of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan was posted on the website and available in a paper copy or accessible format upon request.

The Election Page on the Township website included information regarding Accessibility and included the following statement, "The Township of Douro-Dummer recognizes that persons with disabilities should be provided with an equal opportunity to access goods, services and information in a manner consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality".

The Township website, is WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant. The website was updated regularly with election information and any temporary service disruptions. Election Information was provided through the website, social media, and newspapers.

Further to the more traditional methods of communicating information to the community regarding elections, staff also created a series of short, easy to understand

YouTube videos discussing the upcoming elections. At the time of writing this report the videos have been viewed 645 times.

The Nomination Package for candidates included a copy of the Association of Municipal Managers Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections. A form to request accessible formats was provided to candidates. All accessibility information was available on the website as well as in paper format or accessible format upon request.

The Township did not receive any requests for accessible formats or accommodation.

Voting System

Simply Voting's Internet voting system supports a minimum of WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility standards and is compatible with all market leading screen readers and web accessible devices. Simply Voting's system fully complies with AODA requirements for optimal user experience.

Voting Location

The Voting Place was located in the Township Office and was assessed in order to identify any barriers to accessibility. Provincial Election Staff also review this location as it is used in Provincial Elections. No barriers were identified. Accessible parking spaces were clearly marked and available close to the main entrance to the Voting Place / Municipal Office. Chairs were available for those who needed a rest spot while waiting to vote. The two voting kiosks and a telephone were placed on desks that could accommodate mobility devices.

An Election Help Centre was established at the Township Office on the main floor and opened the following dates and times for those electors who needed assistance: October 11, 2022 to October 23, 2022, during normal business hours.
Monday, October 24, 2022 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Two voting computers and one telephone was provided in the Election Help Centre. The two voting computers included keyboards and two types of mice for those with hand agility concerns.

Signage in large font was posted throughout the municipal building as well as outside on the front doors.

Staff Training

Staff who carried out election duties received accessibility training to ensure that persons with disabilities were served in a way that accommodated their needs. Election Staff were all municipal employees trained in accessibility and experienced in serving the needs of the public. Attention was given to the voting process to determine any

barriers that may arise and how these would be dealt with. Election staff were available to the public by phone, in-person and by email.

Assistance to Candidates

The Accessibility Plan permitted candidates and scrutineers to be accompanied by a service animal at the Voter Help Centre/Municipal Office. The Plan included a statement that expenses related to a disability are excluded from the spending limit. Accessibility Information to assist candidates with their campaign was made available on the Township website and in their nomination package, including a form to request accessible formats.

The Township did not receive any requests from Candidates for accessible formats or accommodations.

Assistance to Electors

Internet and Telephone Voting

The Township of Douro-Dummer used Vote-By-Internet and Telephone in the 2022 Municipal Election. Internet voting and telephone voting provided easy access for voters to vote independently from the privacy of their home and accommodated a variety of disabilities. The Voter Information Letter was in an accessible font and informed electors how to request assistance to vote.

Voters had the option to use assistive devices on their home computers or telephone to cast their vote. Voters also had the option to attend the voting place where election staff were prepared to assist them to vote using either a laptop within a voting kiosk or the telephone. The laptops were easily mobile and therefore could accommodate a person with mobility issues by taking the laptop to a vehicle in the parking lot or a home, if needed.

Two voting kiosks and a telephone were available in the Help Center at the voting place where the voter could vote by calling into the voter system using the phone or use a touch pad or cordless mouse to use a laptop to vote. Some persons found the laptops hard to use and staff were on hand to assist if requested. If this was found to be difficult for a voter they could easily switch to vote using the telephone.

Election staff were trained and available to provide individual assistance to the Voter. Assistance was offered and was provided upon request at the voting place. Internet and Telephone voting continued to be well received and many commented that they found the experience quite easy.

In advance of the election, Voter Lookup, as provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), was available on the Township website and at the

front counter so electors could check the voters' list on their own or could visit the Township Office. When Voter Lookup was closed staff provided services for electors to confirm if they were on the voters list and register if they were not. Electors filled in a registration form, confirmed the information provided and uploaded their identification with their qualifying address. The form and identification were received by an Election Official who then communicated back with them and emailed them their Voter Information Letter to vote from the comfort of their own home.

Strategic Plan Applicability: To ensure and enable an effective and efficient municipal administration.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Report.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 11, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Elana Arthurs