

THE CORPORATION OF
THE NATION MUNICIPALITY



2022 Post-Elections Accessibility Report

Introduction

The Nation Municipality was committed to making the 2022 Municipal Elections accessible by working to accommodate the needs of electors by removing barriers to vote for persons with disabilities. The focus of the Post-Elections Accessibility Report is to evaluate the accessibility of the electoral services offered to all electors and candidates in the 2022 Municipal Elections. This report outlines the various initiatives undertaken during the course of the 2022 Municipal Elections regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Post-elections reporting

In accordance with section 12.1 (3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Clerk's Office shall provide a report, within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with accessibility needs. The report will be available to the public and posted on the Municipal website in an accessible format once it has been approved by Council.

Leading up to the election, an Election Accessibility Plan (the "Plan") was developed. Upon completion, the proposed plan was presented to council for review and comment. The 2022 Plan guides the provision of election related services to persons with disabilities. The Plan was designed to respect the dignity and independence of electors and candidates, and ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity. The following are the various initiatives undertaken by the Clerk's Department during the course of the 2022 elections:

Voting methods

The Nation Municipality worked with Intelivote Systems Inc to provide e-voting services to eligible voters. The services provided voters the convenience of voting from anywhere in the comfort of their own home via telephone, Internet or in person at a Voter Help Centre during the October 19-24, 2022 voting period.

The Intelivote Voting System provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation. Additionally, persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes can now use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

By allowing persons with disabilities to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there was an increase in the capability for the voter to vote without any assistance. This provided persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters. We provided voting assistance by

Election Officials for those who needed it at in-person Voter Help Centre Locations offered across The Nation Municipality, throughout the voting period.

1. Telephone voting

The Intelivote telephone voting application provided the following:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices.
- Clear, plain language.
- Menu options that were easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections.
- Standard volume was used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized.

2. Internet voting

Eligible voters voted online, using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their date of birth and PIN and qualifying information, to access the Internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter.

The Intelivote System was created to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), so that persons with disabilities could perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting system. It was compliant with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium website principles, which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio.

3. In-person voting at Voter Help Centre locations

For those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or Internet, or who required the assistance of a trained Election Official, Voter Help Centre locations were opened during the voting period, including on Election Day, to provide in-person Internet voting or telephone voting opportunities via a laptop, touch screen monitor or telephone.

Before the opening of all voting locations, Election Officials performed final accessibility checks to ensure that the locations were set-up in an accessible manner. They prioritized the identification of voting location access routes and entrances by providing appropriate internal and external signage, ensuring that voters with accessibility needs were directed to the accessible voting entrance through prominent signage, and making the accessible entrance the same as the main entrance where possible. The Clerk's Office staff also ensured that all Election Officials responsible for setting-up voting locations were aware of legislative accessibility requirements in the event that last-minute changes needed to be made to voting locations.

During the entire voting period, personal assistive devices were permitted in all voting locations, such as wheelchairs and walkers. Support persons and service animals were

welcomed, and assistance was offered to voters at every stage of the voting process, including being greeted at the door, making any necessary amendments to their information on the Voters' List, and casting their electronic ballot. Election Officials treated all voters with dignity and respect, being sensitive to the individual needs of voters and recognizing that some required unique attention. Bilingual Election Officials were staffed in each voting location and numerous chairs were available for voters with disabilities to sit at while they waited in line. It is important to also note that there was a mix of both laptops with mice and touch screen iPads.

Access to the Voter Help Centre interior and voting area was levelled and slip-resistant. Any doormats or carpeting were levelled with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area was well lit and seating were made available. Entrance corridors were clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and allowed sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter.

An accessible voting area was available at each Voter Help Centre location. These areas were low in height and had a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively.

The designated parking spaces were clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and were on firm and level ground, close to the entrance of each Voter Help Centre location.

Voters could attend any Voter Help Centre location throughout the voting period at the following times:

- **Casselman Municipal Office** (958 Route 500 West, Casselman, Ontario):
 - Wednesday, October 19, 2022, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
 - Thursday, October 20, 2022, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
 - Friday, October 21, 2022, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
 - Saturday, October 22, 2022, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.;
 - Sunday, October 23, 2022, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.;
 - Monday, October 24, 2022, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.;

- **Fournier Satellite Office** (3248 County Road 9, Fournier, Ontario):
 - Wednesday, October 19, 2022, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
 - Thursday, October 20, 2022, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
 - Friday, October 21, 2022, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
 - Saturday, October 22, 2022, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.;
 - Sunday, October 23, 2022, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.;
 - Monday, October 24, 2022, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.;

- **Limoges Municipal Library** (205 Limoges Road, Limoges, Ontario):
 - Thursday, October 20, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- **St-Isidore Municipal Library** (4531 Ste-Catherine Street, St-Isidore, Ontario):

- Thursday, October 20, 2022 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

It was the goal of The Nation Municipality's Clerk's Department to ensure that electors within the municipality who required accessibility services were provided with the best opportunity to vote as independently as possible in the 2022 Municipal and School Board Elections. Clerk's Services staff also strived to make the nomination and registration process as accessible as possible for candidates and third parties.

Josée Brizard
Clerk