



Town of Ingersoll 2022 Accessible Election Plan

This document will be provided in alternate formats upon request

Introduction

The Town of Ingersoll is committed to providing an accessible municipal election for all stakeholders including electors, candidates, employees and volunteers. This plan is created in compliance with requirements under the *Municipal Elections Act* and takes into consideration the Town's Multi-year Accessibility Plan.

Legislative Requirements

The Town Clerk is responsible for coordinating and conducting municipal elections and for establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors are provided the opportunity to fully participate in the 2022 municipal election. Accessibility requirements established under the *Municipal Elections Act* are complied with in coordination with Town policies and procedures as required by the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11.

Specifically, the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996 as amended states:

- 12.1(1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21 s. 8 (8)
- 12.1(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 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). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s 30 (1).
- 45(2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (23).



Key Objectives

At all times the Town will seek to achieve consistency with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation's* principles of dignity, independence, equal opportunity and integration and will consider how the principles can be applied to the Town's election plans and procedures. This plan further seeks to ensure that the election is accessible to all voters and that each voter and candidate is treated fairly and consistently while maintaining the integrity of the voting process and ensuring that the election is conducted in a fair and non-biased manner.

With respect to the identification, prevention and removal of barriers, the following represent the Town's key areas of focus:

1. Elections Communication and Information;
2. The Voting Method and Ballot Return Locations; and
3. Assistance for Electors.

Accessible Customer Service

The Town of Ingersoll's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy (Appendix 'A') shall be applied to the 2022 municipal elections plans and procedures. At all times, the Town and its employees shall ensure that services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

1. Elections Communication and Information

The Town of Ingersoll shall provide elections-related communication and information in a manner that takes into consideration the accessibility needs of voters. Specifically the Town shall:

- Ensure information is provided in clear and plain language;
- Post all relevant elections-related information to the Town's elections landing page which exceeds web content accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1);
- Communicate temporary service disruptions in accordance with the Town's Accessible Customer Service Policy; and
- Provide elections-related information and communications in an alternative formats upon request.

2. Voting Method and Ballot Return Locations

Voting Method

The approved alternative voting method for the 2022 municipal election is vote-by-mail. This method increases accessibility by mailing a ballot and return envelope to every



eligible elector on the voters' list thus removing the need for individuals to visit a traditional polling location to cast a vote. To further increase the accessibility of the election, the Clerk's office provides a Home-Assisted Vote Retrieval Program whereby individuals who are unable to leave their residence due to disability, may schedule a home visit with Town staff who will facilitate ballot delivery and/or retrieval. See appendix 'B' for the Town's Home-Assisted Vote Retrieval Program.

Ballot Return Locations

Return envelopes may be mailed back to the Town via Canada Post up until the guaranteed return date of October 13, 2022. The Town also offers two additional ballot return locations:

- Town Hall – 130 Oxford St. 2nd Floor, Ingersoll ON
- Town Hall Drop Box – street level, 130 Oxford St. Ingersoll, ON

Ballot return stations:

- Will be clearly and plainly marked as will all routes and entrances to the return station;
- Are located in a building that has two accessible parking spaces; and
- Are accessible via the ground floor or elevator.

Staff will ensure that all routes and entrances remain free of obstacles and will promptly communicate any service disruptions in accordance with the Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Election Day Accessibility

Town Hall will function as a polling station on Election Day, October 24, 2022. Voting stations located at Town Hall will be equipped with magnifiers and a list of all candidates in an accessible font style and large print.

3. Assistance for Electors

The Clerk's office will provide assistance to voters, as requested including:

- Upon request, provide electors with the opportunity to vote from anywhere at the voting place on Election Day (including curbside) with assistance from a Deputy Returning Officer.
- Upon request, assist the elector with voting or reading of the ballot.
- Enable electors to swear an oath if they are unable to provide the required identification and/or documentation with a signature.
- Enable electors to swear an oath to request voting assistance.



- Allow electors to enter the voting location with a support person or guide dog in accordance with the Town's Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Post-Election Report

The Clerk will review the outcomes and efficacy of this plan with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify areas for improvement. The Clerk will provide an overview of the committee's feedback and the overall outcomes of the Accessible Election Plan in accordance with requirements under the *Municipal Elections Act*.

The report will be presented to Council and subsequently posted to the Town's website in a format that is accessible to persons with disabilities.

Accessibility Feedback

Feedback on this plan will be collected in accordance with the Accessible Customer Service Policy. Feedback can be submitted via the following means:

Contact Method	Contact Details
Email	clerks@ingersoll.ca
Telephone	(519) 485-0120
Mail	130 Oxford St. 2nd Floor, Ingersoll, ON, N5C 2V5
In-Person	130 Oxford St. 2nd Floor, Ingersoll, ON, N5C 2V5, Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. except for Holidays



Appendix A

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy

This document will be provided in alternate formats upon request

Commitment

The Town of Ingersoll is committed to meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. In meeting its requirements, the Town will ensure its policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the Regulation's principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Related Definitions

Support Persons – A support person is another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. A support person can be a professional, a volunteer, family member or friend.

Service Animal – Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability and if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse or other government issued certification confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Guide Dog – A dog trained to lead blind or vision impaired people around obstacles.

Assistive Device – Any device that is designed, made, or adapted to assist a person perform a particular task.

Guidelines

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. [Providing Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;](#)
- B. [Communication](#)
- C. [Documents, Information and Billing](#)
- D. [The Use of Assistive Devices](#)
- E. [The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs](#)
- F. [The Use of Support Persons](#)
- G. [Notice of Service Disruptions](#)



H. Feedback Process

I. Training for Staff

J. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

A. Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

To achieve consistency with the Regulation's principles of dignity, independence, equal opportunity and integration, the Town of Ingersoll will:

- Ensure that all patrons and the public receive the same value and quality of services and goods offered by the Town;
- Integrate accessibility measures into practices, policies and procedures governing access to the Town's goods and services;
- Provide opportunities equal to those given to others to persons with disabilities to obtain, use and benefit from the Town's goods and services;
- Allow persons with disabilities that access the Town's goods and services to do things in their own way and at their own pace so long it does not present a safety risk;
- Use alternative measures when necessary, whether temporary or permanent, to enable persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's goods and services;
- Take into account individual needs when providing goods and services;

B. Communication

The Town of Ingersoll will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account the individual's disability. Accessible communication practices extend to face-to-face communication, communicating via the telephone and via email.

All staff who communicate with patrons of our facilities, residents and the public will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. Specifically staff will:

- Communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account the individual's disability.
- Where necessary, communicate with persons with disabilities using clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly when communicating face-to-face or via the phone.
- Receive and facilitate communication via the telephone using Message Relay Services (TTY).



- Offer alternate means of communication, for example, use of paper and a pen, email, or telephone, if communications are not suitable to the individual's communication needs.

C. Documents, Information and Billing

Where requested by a person with a disability, the Town of Ingersoll will provide its documents and information contained in documents in a format that takes into account the person's disability. Employees will work with the requesting individual to determine an agreeable format.

Specifically, the Town is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of its customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request:

- Hard copy,
- Large print; and
- Email.

Town employees will answer any questions our residents, patrons and the public may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone, email or mail.

D. Assistive Devices

Customer's Own Assistive Device(s)

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. The Town of Ingersoll will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

E. Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals

The Town of Ingersoll will welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, service dog or guide dog on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that the person is permitted to keep the service animal, service dog or guide dog with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.



If the service animal, service dog or guide dog is excluded from the premises by law, the Town of Ingersoll will work with the person to identify and implement alternate means to allow the individual to obtain, use, or benefit from the Town's goods and services.

We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers, and others are dealing with the public and are properly trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the patron for reasons relating to his or her disability, Town of Ingersoll employees may request verification from the patron.

Verification may include:

- A letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- A valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
- A certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The patron that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

Allergies

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, the Town of Ingersoll will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

F. Support Persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person to Town of Ingersoll locations and facilities. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the Town of Ingersoll's premises with his or her support person and at no time will the individual be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on premises.

Alternatively, the Town of Ingersoll may require that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person when on Town premises, but only in situations where the presence of a support person is deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on premises.



Admission Fees

Fees will not be charged to support persons for admission to Town of Ingersoll premises that require admission or service fees. Patrons will be informed of this by a notice that will be posted in the Town of Ingersoll's premises.

G. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

The Town of Ingersoll will provide notice to the public in the event of a whole or partial, planned or unplanned service disruption to Town of Ingersoll facilities or services. Public notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services that are available.

In the event of a disruption, notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises as well as the Town's website and any other location deemed appropriate.

All staff will be trained on recognizing and reporting service disruptions, which may include, but are not limited to:

- The postponement or cancellation of a class, event or activity offered by the Town of Ingersoll and on Town of Ingersoll premises.
- Closure of a Town of Ingersoll facility.
- Disruption or malfunction of a facility, service or piece of equipment that may affect a person's ability to access Town of Ingersoll goods and services, for example, elevator service disruption, ramp access under repair, accessible washroom out of service, etc.

Staff that are aware of a service disruption that may potentially impact a person with a disability's ability to access Town of Ingersoll premises or services will report the issue to their manager immediately, who will in turn prepare and make available to the public the notice of disruption.

H. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of the Town of Ingersoll is to meet and surpass the expectations of all of patrons, residents and the public including individuals with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Town of Ingersoll provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by:



Submitting Feedback

Email	info@ingersoll.ca
Verbally	To any Town employee
Mail	Town Centre 130 Oxford Street, 2 nd Floor Ingersoll On N5C 2V5 Please address mail to the Town's Clerk
Telephone	(519) 485-0120
Any other means deemed necessary	

All feedback will be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer or designate. Patrons, residents and the public who submit formal feedback and provide their contact information can expect to receive a response within ten (10) business days including any resulting actions based on the concerns or complaints that were submitted.

I. Training for Staff

The Town of Ingersoll will provide training on its accessible customer service policies, procedures and practices to the following:

- All employees, volunteers, agents, and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of the Town of Ingersoll; and
- Those who are involved in the development and approval of Town of Ingersoll customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training will be provided within one (1) month after the staff person commences their duties with the Town.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- How to use the various pieces of equipment available on the Town of Ingersoll's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do is a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Town of Ingersoll's goods or services.



- The Town of Ingersoll's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Training Records

The Town of Ingersoll will maintain training records including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom the training was provided.

J. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

The Town of Ingersoll will notify its patrons, residents and the public that the documents related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, including this document relating to the Customer Service Standard will be made available upon request and in a format that takes into account the person's disability. Notification of the availability of accessibility documents will be given by posting the information in public areas of Town premises and on the Town's website.

Modifications to This or Other Policies

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of the Town of Ingersoll that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions about This Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to their Department Head or designate.

Any individual may request a copy of this document, at which time they will be provided the document in a format that meets their accessibility needs.



Appendix B

2022 Home-Assisted Vote Retrieval Procedure

The following outlines the logistics of Ingersoll's Home-Assisted Voting Procedure. Voters who reside in Ingersoll may request a home visit if they are prevented from leaving their residence in order to obtain their vote by mail kit from the mail, or return their completed vote by mail kit through Canada Post or Town Hall located at 130 Oxford St. 2nd Floor, Ingersoll ON.

Note: Due to the nature of home visits, candidates and scrutineers are not permitted to attend scheduled home-assisted vote retrievals.

Home-Assisted Vote Retrieval Dates and Times

To be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

Requesting a Home Visit

Voters may request a home visit between late September (when the vote by mail kits are mailed to electors), until October 14th at noon. Voters are encouraged to contact Town Hall as soon as possible to arrange for a home visit.

Voters can request a home visit by phoning Town Hall at (519) 485-0120 or by emailing clerks@ingersoll.ca

Scheduling a Home Visit

Role	Step
Voter	Contact Town Hall to request a home visit. Note: if the voter emails to request a home visit, staff will call the voter to schedule the visit.
Election Staff	1. Advise the voter that home visits are provided to persons who are unable to leave their homes and confirm that the voter is unable to leave their home due to illness, injury or disability either to retrieve their vote by mail kit or return their kit in mail or to Town Hall. Note: Do not inquire as to the illness, injury or circumstance that necessitates the home visit.
	2. Request the voter's name and log into voterview to determine if the voter: a) Is on the voters' list and if so:



	<p>I. Verify the voter's address and school support II. Determine if he or she has already voted.</p> <p>b) Has received their vote by mail kit (take into consideration the date of the request to determine if the vote by mail kit should have been delivered to the voter).</p> <p>*Note: if voterview indicates that the voter has been sent a vote by mail kit but he or she is unable to retrieve their kit from the mail, has not received their vote by mail kit or has misplaced, lost or damaged their kit, procedures established under sections 13.19 to 13.23 of this procedure manual for issuing a replacement kit must be followed.</p> <p><u>Individuals not on the voters' list or whose information is incorrect:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the voter's address to verify that he or she is eligible to vote in the Ingersoll municipal elections.• If the voter is eligible, inform him/her that they will need to complete the 'Application to Amend the Voters' List (form EL15) be added to the voters' list or to have their information corrected. Valid ID is required for all additions to the list. <p><u>Scheduling the Home Visit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the voter with an overview of the home-assisted vote retrieval process based on the needs of the voter including if the visit:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is to retrieve the completed vote by mail kit, if so, refer to the Home-Assisted Vote Retrieval Procedure;○ Is to enable the voter to complete their ballot and/or add or change their voters' list information. Inform the voter that they will need to provide an acceptable form of ID. Proceed to Home-Assisted Vote Casting and Retrieval Procedure.• Schedule the home visit based on the availability of the voter and election officials.• Complete the home visit scheduling form noting the voter's address and contact information as well as any accessibility needs.• Ask that if the voter has any pets that they be kept in a separate room for the duration of the visit. <p><u>Home-Assisted Vote Retrieval Procedure – Vote Retrieval</u></p> <p>Procedure to be followed when the voter has completed the steps of the vote by mail kit and is unable to return the kit via Canada Post or to the Municipal Office.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff will arrive at the voter’s home with a portable ballot box and will have the voter place their ballot contained in its secrecy envelope in the secure ballot box, or place the ballot in the box in view of the voter if he or she is unable to do so themselves.• Staff will update Home Assisted spreadsheet to indicate that the individual has voted.• Ballots will be processed in accordance with section 19 of the procedure manual. <p><u>Home-Assisted Vote Retrieval Procedure – Vote Casting and Retrieval</u></p> <p>Procedure to be followed when the voter must be issued a ballot (replacement or due to being added to the voters’ list).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff will follow the proper procedure for issuing a ballot to the elector and where necessary will collect appropriate EL15 forms and amend or add the voter to the voterview system.• If a replacement kit is to be issued the procedures established under sections 13.19 to 13.23 of the Procedure manual will be followed.• The voter will be provided the vote by mail kit and the opportunity to complete their ballot in private.• If the voter requires assistance from a support person to complete the ballot the oral oath (Form EL27) will be given.• Once completed, the voter will place their ballot contained in the secrecy envelope in the secure ballot box.• Staff will update Home Assisted spreadsheet to indicate that the individual has voted.• Ballots will be processed in accordance with section 19 of the procedure manual.
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Staff will always travel with:

- A secure ballot box
- extra secrecy envelopes
- replacement voting kits and replacement voting kit declaration forms
- Extra EL15 Forms
- Form EL27 – Oral Oath of Friend or Interpreter/Assistance
- A copy of the Procedures for the 2022 Municipal Elections and Alternative Voting Method

COVID 19 Protocols



Appropriate health and safety protocols will be followed to limit the spread of COVID-19. Health measures may include, but not be limited to:

- Masking
- Pre-screening of the voter and household members for symptoms of COVID-19
- Physical distancing

Safety measures to be adhered to will be based on the most up-to-date recommendations of Southwestern Public Health.