

# **POST-ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY REPORT**

December 31, 2018

FROM: Elizabeth (Lisa) Slomke, Clerk

SUBJECT: Accessibility – 2018 Municipal Elections

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Fort Frances committed to making the 2018 Municipal Election accessible by working to accommodate the needs of electors to remove barriers to vote for persons with disabilities.

The purpose of this report is to review and evaluate the accessible services offered to all electors and candidates in the 2018 Municipal Election and contains details related to the actions taken during the course of the 2018 Municipal Election regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

By choosing Telephone/Internet Voting, the intention is to:

- Provide easy access for voters to cast their ballot
- Have the vote results calculated and available quickly
- Have results that are accurate
- Allow qualified electors to vote anywhere, and anytime during the voting period
- Eliminate traditional advance voting
- Reduce staffing requirements
- Eliminate proxy voting.

The “vote anywhere, anytime” perspective allows voters to cast their ballot when convenient.

In accordance with section 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, 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. This report will be made available to the public by being posted on the Town’s website.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Regulation 429/07 requires municipalities to provide for:

- Electors with service animals and support staff
- Notice of temporary disruptions of service
- Accessibility training for all election staff
- Procedures for responding to feedback
- Notice of availability of documents.

The Town of Fort Frances policy on Accessibility, approved by Council in June 2009, addresses these issues. (It is important to remember that the Municipality is obligated by law, when requested by a member of the public, to provide any document pertaining to the Municipal Elections in a format that shall take into account the person's disability.)

## **ACTIONS TAKEN**

- Telephone/Internet Voting provided the electors with the ability to vote from anywhere at any time. This allowed increased rights of privacy to electors with disabilities whom may find voting at traditional paper-based locations more difficult as they had the ability to vote with little or no assistance required from others.
- Election Officials made electors aware of the availability of assistance for person requiring same. Elections Officials were positioned to greet electors as they came in to the Voting Centre and assist them as may be necessary.
- Election information was communicated through various channels and alternative formats including e-mails, social media, newspaper and radio. For election related inquiries, all residents were able to contact the Clerk/Returning Officer or other election staff via telephone or through a designated e-mail address.
- Election staff ensured that all information was made available to candidates in alternate formats upon request. No such requests were received. All relevant election information was posted to the Town website which includes an option that allows the font size to be adjusted.
- Voterview was available leading up to the election as an online platform for electors to search the Voters' List from their personal device to determine whether they were on the list and add their information.
- Voting Centre was established in Council Chambers at the Civic Centre during daytime hours for electors who required assistance to be added to the list or to vote. The Voting Centre is barrier free with no obstructions at the entrance, includes handi-cap parking at grade, entrances equipped with automatic door openers, doorway width accommodates mobility devices and seats available for those that need a rest.
- Big Button Phones and a magnifier were available at the Voting Centre. No requests were received to use either the phones or magnifier. Election Officials were present to provide assistance upon the completion of an 'Oath of a Friend'.
- Arrangements were made with Long Term Care facility and the local hospital to arrange mutually convenient dates to attend their facility to provide residents the ability to be added to the voters list, obtain a Voter Information letter and vote using laptop. The following was

provided.

Date	Time	Location	# of Election Officials
October 15, 2018 (Monday)	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	Rainycrest Long Term Care Home 550 Osborne Street	2
October 17, 2018 (Wednesday)	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	LaVerendrye General Hospital (Extended Care Wing) 110 Victoria Avenue	2
October 18, 2018 (Thursday)	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	Columbus Place 425 Nelson Street	2

**This report is prepared by the Clerk as per requirements of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, section 12.1(3) and is being provided to Council as information only. The report will be posted on the Town website for the public.**

**No further action is required by Council.**