



# The Corporation of the Town of Smooth Rock Falls 2022 Municipal Elections Accessibility Report

<b>Dept. Report No. 2022-C07-01</b>	<b>Date: December 5, 2022</b>	<b>Prepared by: Véronique Dion, CMO – Municipal Clerk</b>
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## **SUMMARY:**

This report is in compliance with section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act. This report serves to inform the public of the steps that were taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers affecting electors and candidates with disabilities as per the Municipal Elections Act 1996 under section 12.1, subsection 1, 2 and 3.

### ***12.1(1) Electors and candidates with disabilities***

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

### ***12.1 (2) Plan re barriers***

*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.*

### ***12.1 (3) Report***

*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.*

The Clerk, as Returning Officer, took every effort to reduce barriers on a number of levels with regard to the planning and undertaking of the 2022 Municipal Election.

All election staff received accessible customer service training in 2022 prior to the elections.

## **Identification of Barriers**

**The following Steps were taken to identify barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities:**

The voting equipment and material was reviewed to ensure that all barriers were removed. The voting locations were assessed and all barriers found were removed or resolved.

## **Removal and Prevention of Barriers**

### ***Communications and Information***

All municipal and elections staff were given accessibility training to ensure that all interaction with people with disabilities was done in a respectful manner and that every effort be given to provide information in a respectful and timely manner.

Candidates were given the “Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections”.

Information was provided in Large Print and Magnifying sheets were provided to assist the visually impaired.

The elections staff was instructed to assist electors when needed.

### ***Voting Locations***

The voting locations were visited and evaluated to ensure full accessibility.

The Smooth Rock Falls Hospital meets all accessibility standards for public spaces including all signage is in large print and brail. All doors to access the voting location are automated and staff was instructed to assist electors should it be required. The voting location was ground level which eliminated the barrier of stairs.

The advanced polls and voting day location was the Community Hall. Accessible parking signs were present on the building. The Entrance to the Community Hall is automated but a Greeter was hired to assist individuals with accessing the voting place should they require any additional assistance. The voting location was ground level which eliminated the barrier of stairs and wheelchairs was made available to further assist electors with mobility issues.

### ***Voting Stations***

Both locations were set-up in a way to ensure maximum accessibility. Sufficient space was made available to provide easy access to voting booths. Staff was instructed to assist individuals with special needs to ensure that everyone who entered the voting location was able to vote. Large print information posters were posted at all voting stations and read out to individuals when needed. Magnifying sheets were made available in the voting booths to assist individuals with visual impairment.

A voting location was provided in the Smooth Rock Falls Hospital to ensure that persons who have disabilities, the chronically ill and/or the infirmed were given an opportunity to vote with greater ease.

## ***Staff Training***

All election staff received accessibility training with reference material, as well as a copy of the Town's accessibility Policies and Procedures prior to the advance polls and the elections.

The training ensured that the staff knew how to interact and how to assist persons with various types of disability. Elections staff were trained to ensure that voters were able to clearly see the speaker. They were trained on how to not assume an individual needs help but to offer assistance to an elector who appeared to have difficulty getting around the voting location. Elections staff were trained to identify a service animal and followed the Town's accessibility policy. Elections staff was directed to maintain a friendly and approachable demeanour, regardless of how tired, or a worker may have felt. Greeters were trained to check the access doors frequently to offer assistance and watch for electors unable to easily enter the building.

A copy of, and a review of the Town's policies and procedures on Accessibility was provided to all elections staff.

## **Considerations for 2026 Election**

1. Although the option was reviewed for this election but not undertaken at this time; that internet voting reviewed again and be considered as an alternate form of voting for the 2026 municipal elections.



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