



## Village of South River 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

### **Introduction**

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2018 Municipal Election in the Village of South River.

In an effort to ensure that the 2018 Municipal Election is consistent with core principals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, this planning documents was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported following the election.

### **Legal Requirements and Authority**

The following excerpts from the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, SCHED 32, define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities:

#### **Number and location of voting places**

The Clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s.45 (1)

#### **Accessibility**

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).

#### **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. 2016, c. 15, s.11.

#### **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. 2016, c.15, s. 11.

### **Variations for electors with visual impairments**

The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers 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).

### **Objectives**

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Village of South River will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That all voting locations are accessible;
- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection;
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate or election official;
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures via channels such as the Village's website and municipal communications to the public (Ripples newsletter, tax inserts, office signage).

### **Development of the Plan**

This Plan is an active document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

### **Voting Location**

For the purpose of this plan, the Voting Location includes the exterior parking, walkways and property associated with the **South River Municipal Office** located at **63 Marie Street, South River**. This will be the only Voting Location for the Village of South River Municipal Elections.

In order to ensure that this Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Location Accessibility Audit Checklist will be completed prior to Election Day. This checklist has been included with this plan.

### **Parking**

Designated parking for electors with disabilities is to be provided in close proximity to the entrance of the voting place. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked and will be on firm and level ground. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

### **Entrance/Exit to the Voting Place**

The entrance to the Voting Place will be easy to access and barrier free. Every effort will be made to ensure that the door into the interior voting area is wide enough (860mm or 34 inches) for a wheel chair, scooter, other assistive device or service animal to pass through safely and

easily. Should doors into the interior voting area not be accessible the doors shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the day.

### **Interior Voting Area**

Access to the interior voting area will be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit and seating will be made available.

### **Support Persons**

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting area. In addition, an Election Official in the voting place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector with the disability, determine the extent to which he/she needs assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may actually be marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. Persons requiring additional support will be invited to contact the municipal election in advance of Election Day in order to customize a plan for each individual.

### **Assistive Personal Equipment**

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

### **Service Animals**

An animal is a Service Animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, for example, a guide dog wearing a harness. Service Animals will be permitted in voting places. We would invite persons who intend to bring a Service Dog to the voting area to contact the municipal office in advance of Election Day in an effort to coordinate the person's needs with the practical aspect of line up and crowds.

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the voting place.

### **Vision Loss**

Each voting booth will be equipped with magnifying sheets to assist an individual with low vision.

### **Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss**

Each voting place will be equipped with a note pad and pen to communicate with the hearing impaired if required.

### **Proxy Voting**

An elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to the voting location may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available on the Village's website or at the municipal office's front desk. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oath. The Clerk Administrator or the Municipal Treasurer can administer the oath at the municipal office which is located at 63 Marie Street, South River. An appointment is required. Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance poll or on the final voting day. On the final voting day, the proxy must be exercised at the voting location on behalf of the person who is unable to attend. The appointment of a proxy may only be made after 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day (Friday, July 27, 2018) and is null and void after the final voting day.

### **Campaign Expenses**

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability, are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate.

### **Voting Methods**

**Traditional Ballot:** The Village of South River uses traditional ballots which consists of the certified Candidates names for an office (Mayor or Councillor) being listed on a paper ballot and the voter has the right to mark the names of the individuals he/she would like to have represent the community for the next four year term of council.

### **Communications**

The Village of South River is committed to making the information contained in this document available to the public and intends to do so by the following methods:

1. On the Village of South River Website
2. A hard copy available at the South River Machar Union Library
3. By verbal communications regarding certain aspects of this documents and questions which may arise from it.

### **Service Disruptions**

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Village's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary accessible service disruption, Election Officials will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, the Village will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the municipal office or to the services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Accessible Services in relation to this plan include the voting place (63 Marie Street, South River), election materials and/or voting provisions for electors with disabilities at the voting place.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of the voting location during the advance vote or on the final voting day, Notices of Disruption will be posted in real time:

1. On the Village's website
2. On the South River Machar Fire Department's Facebook Account
3. Posted at the site of disruption; and
4. Where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

### **Feedback**

The Village welcomes feedback to help identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Village can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

Such feedback can be submitted to the municipal office in any one of the following ways:

1. E-mail: [info@southernriverontario.com](mailto:info@southernriverontario.com)
2. Fax: 705-386-0702
3. In Person or by Mail: Village of South River, 63 Marie Street, PO Box 310, South River, Ontario, P0A 1X0
4. Telephone: 705-386-2573

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election information and services.