

June 16, 2025

Elections Manitoba
120 - 200 Vaughan Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 1T5

ATTENTION: MS. SHIPRA VERMA

BY EMAIL

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure
316-323 Main St.
Steinbach MB R5G 1Z2

ATTENTION: RYAN COULTER

BY EMAIL

AccurateHD
15 Industrial Dr,
New Bothwell, MB R0A 0C8

ATTENTION: JAMES RIVERS

BY EMAIL

Re: Access to polling station, Lorette, Manitoba

The Elections Act makes it an offence to impede a voter from exercising his or her right to vote. During the last Manitoba general election, a parish hall in Lorette, Manitoba, was to be used as a polling place, but on the day of the general election the turn on the roadway providing access to the hall was blocked for repair work. Elections Manitoba asked me to investigate how that happened and whether any steps needed to be taken to prevent a similar occurrence in the future. I am writing now to report on the findings of that investigation.

A plan for the road closure was submitted by AccurateHD, the construction company doing the work, and was approved by Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (“MTI”) in late September. The plan called for the work to begin on October 2, 2023, the day before the election. At that point, no one at MTI or at AccurateHD, realized that the proposed road closure plan would impact access to a polling station. By the time the problem was

identified on the afternoon of October 2, access to the polling station had already been blocked.

Elections Manitoba learned of the problem on October 2 and Ms. Verma, the Chief Electoral Officer, wrote to Kathryn Gerrard, the Clerk of the Executive Council, asking to have access restored for election day. That afternoon, Ms. Verma received a copy of an email sent from MTI to AccurateHD that requested AccurateHD to “modify your Traffic Management Plan and/or work schedule in order to maintain full, unrestricted and un-interrupted access to the Parish Hall tomorrow, October 3rd 2023. Polls are open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.”

Elections Manitoba understood that the matter was resolved, but on election day they discovered that MTI and AccurateHD had decided not to open the turn that would normally provide access to the polling station but had instead provided an alternate route that required travelling a circuitous path with confusing signage. When Elections Manitoba learned on the morning of the election that access was still restricted, it contacted the parties and asked that the turn into the polling station be opened. Unfortunately, by this time AccurateHD had begun construction of a pipe that was to be installed underground at that intersection and they did not feel they should move it without direction from an engineer at MTI. After some delay, the matter was resolved, and by about 11 am, after the polls had been opened for three hours, the pipe was moved and the turn into the polling station was opened.

This is not a matter that requires any further involvement from me. The Returning Officer received several complaints about the difficult access prior to 11 am, but there is no suggestion that anyone was prevented from voting. I am satisfied that everyone involved was acting in good faith and that no one had any intention of obstructing the voting.

I am confident that Elections Manitoba and MTI will work together to ensure that there is no similar occurrence in future elections. I note that polling locations are posted online by Elections Manitoba well in advance of an election and the solution may be as simple as MTI cross referencing that list with any planned roadwork whenever an election or by-election is pending.

Yours truly,



Bill Bowles
Commissioner of Elections for Manitoba