

2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

**Township of
Drummond/North
Elmsley**

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Introduction

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2018 Municipal Election in the Township of Drummond/North Elmsley.

The Township has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. Commitment has been made in the provision of accessible customer service to persons with disabilities. 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 document was developed in order to identify measures to be taken and reported following the election.

In addition to the Township's Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy for Customer Service Policy, 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

45 (1) 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

(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).

Plan re: barriers

(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 plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Report

(3) 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

43 (3) 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 Township will implement 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 available via channels such as the newspaper, media launches, the Township's website and social media (Facebook, Twitter).

Development of the Plan

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

During the development of the 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps were implemented:

1. The Election Accessibility Plan was reviewed to confirm that the needs of people with disabilities are being met;
2. Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election was established to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment, and to ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voters needs are to be accommodated whenever possible; and
3. Following the Election, a report will be prepared on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Voting Location

For the purpose of this plan, Voting Location includes the exterior parking and walkways associated with the location.

In order to ensure that each Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Location Accessibility Audit Checklist will be completed prior to confirming the site as a voting location.

The site location accessibility audit checklist is included as Appendix "A" to this document.

Prior to the election, a site map of all advance voting and voting day locations will be made available on the Township's website.

Accessible Route

An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location. The voting area will be identified with clear and understandable signage.

Parking

Designated parking for electors with disabilities will be provided in close proximity to the entrance of the Voting Location where possible. 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 Location

All entrances to the Voting Location 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 for a wheel chair, scooter, other assistive device or service animal to pass through safely and easily. 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 Place. In addition, an Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting his/her 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.

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.

Vision Loss

Each Voting Place 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 pad of paper and pen to communicate with the hearing impaired if required.

Voting Location Institutions

The Municipal Elections Act requires that on voting day, a voting location shall be provided on the premises of the following:

Voting places in institutions, retirement homes

45 (7) On voting day, a voting place shall be provided on the premises of the following:

An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces;

An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm;

A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (7); 2016, c. 15, s. 34 (2, 3)

Attendance on resident

(8) The deputy returning officer or designate for a voting place described in subsection (7) may attend on an elector who is a resident of the institution or retirement home, to allow him or her to vote. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (8)

Attendance on electors with disabilities

(9) To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a deputy returning officer shall attend on the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place. 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (3).

For the 2018 Municipal Election, the following institution location has been identified as:

Rideau Ferry County Home, 133 Rideau Ferry Road, Perth, ON

Proxy Voting

An elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a 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 at Township Office and/or on the Township's website. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Township staff can administer the oath (Municipal Office, 310 Port Elmsley Road). Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on the final voting day. On the final voting day, the proxy must be exercised at a 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, July 27, 2018 and is null and void after the final voting day.

Voting Method

All voting for the 2018 Township of Drummond/North Elmsley Municipal Election will be done in-person or by proxy by paper ballot, at a voting location.

Accessibility considerations:

- Ballots will have contrast text
- Magnifier sheets will be available at all voting locations
- Extra-large pencils will be available at all voting locations
- Pencil grips will be available at all voting locations
- Election workers will be trained in providing accessible customer service

Voting Assistance

All voting locations are physically accessible for individuals with disabilities.

Election officials will be available to provide help if needed. Any designated Election official who has taken an oath or affirmation of secrecy from the Deputy Clerk may assist a voter in any manner if he or she is unable to attend to a Voting Screen independently, including: assisting a voter to mark his/her ballot behind a Voting Screen or attending to a voter in a vehicle parked at the Voting Place.

A voter may request assistance from a friend to mark his or her ballot properly, provided they have taken an oath or affirmation of secrecy from the Designated Election Official.

Persons with a disability are permitted to be accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal at any voting location.

Voters' List

Potential electors can confirm and/or update their information through the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) online voter look-up tool which can be accessed through the Township's website at www.dnetownship.ca.

This online tool allows voters to add their name onto the Voters' list at their own convenience, from a variety of devices.

Communications

The Township is required, as per the Accessible Policy, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address the specific needs of a user. The Township and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Township or is supplied by a third party, the Township will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or will attempt to assist the elector by providing assistive equipment.

General Election Material

Large Print – printed material generated by the Town will be provided in a sans serif font, minimum 12 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – information generated by the Township on the website regarding the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A, and allow for assistive software to be utilized. In addition, website font can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township'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 Township will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities in accordance with the Accessibility Standard Policy.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for electors with disabilities at the Voting Location.

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

- on the Township's website website;
- on Facebook;
- on Twitter;
- posted at the site of disruption; and
- where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

Feedback

The Township welcomes customer feedback on Accessible Customer Service to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Township can improve the delivery of an accessible election. Feedback may be submitted in person, telephone, fax or email:

Telephone: 613.267.6500

In Person or Mail: Township Municipal Office
310 Port Elmsley Road, Perth, ON K7H 3C7

Fax: 613-267.2083

E-mail: admin@dnetownship.ca

Once completed, feedback will be forwarded to the Clerk's Department for action. Township staff will respond to the candidate or elector directly within 3 business days providing an anticipated action and timeframe for a full response, where appropriate.

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.

Staff can answer any questions you may have about running for office, the election in general or specific provisions for those persons with disabilities.

Voting Locations:

Township Municipal Office
310 Port Elmsley Road
Perth, ON

Drummond Hall
1920 Concession 7
Perth, ON

Rideau Ferry Country Home (only available to residents of the home)
1333 Rideau Ferry Road
Perth, Ontario

Schedule A - Accessibility Audit Checklist

	Criteria	Y/N	Comments
	Entrance		
	Is the main public entrance a barrier free accessible one? (ext. & int.)		
	Is the entrance well lit?		
	Is the entrance easy to see from the parking areas?		
	Parking Lot		
	Is there accessible parking available?		
	Are the accessible parking spots clearly marked with signs and parked on the pavement?		
	How many accessible parking spots are available?		
	Ramps		
	Are ramps provided?		
	Is the ramp well designed and safe?		
	Are handrails provided on both sides of the ramp?		
	Doors – Main Entrance		
	Is the door hardware accessible?		
	Is the door wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter?		
	Are automatic doors available?		
	Is it level with the voting location?		
	Floor Space		
	Are the widths of corridors, hallways and path wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters?		
	Is the path to travel free of furniture or equipment?		
	Is there space for wheelchair or scooter		

	seating in the seating area?		
	Stairs:		
	Are there any stairs at the voting place?		
	Are there handrails on both sides of the stairs?		
	Washrooms		
	Are accessible stalls located within the facilities?		
	Indicate style of entrance into the washroom with accessible stalls: airport style, automatic, push door?		
	Are grab bars mounted on the wall behind the urinal and on the side wall?		
	Is the toilet flush control automatic or located on the side where the individual would transfer from?		
	Are faucets, fixtures, dispensers and light switches at an appropriate height?		