



The TOWNSHIP of
NORTH DUMFRIES

2018 Election Accessibility Plan

Township of North Dumfries

March 26, 2018

If you require this document in an alternate format,
please contact the Clerk.

Accessible Election Mandate

“The Township of North Dumfries strives to provide a Municipal Election that encourages participation of persons with a disability and inspires confidence.”

The Election Accessibility Plan reaffirms the Township’s commitment to ensure full and equal access to electoral services for persons with disabilities. This Plan identifies and pro-actively addresses accessibility barriers for the 2018 municipal election.

This plan will be monitored and improved or updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise to respond to feedback from the community.

Legislative Requirements - Municipal Elections Act, 1996

Beyond individual Township’s accessibility policies, the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* provides:

“Electors and candidates with disabilities

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

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.

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.

Voting Place Accessibility

45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.”

Definitions

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, defines “**disability**” as,

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, defines “**barrier**” as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice;

Ontario Human Rights Commission

An important note from the Ontario Human Rights Commission, “disability” covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.

Input and Feedback

The Clerk encourages input and feedback to further enhance election accessibility. If you feel you have identified a barrier, have a recommendation to improve accessibility for the upcoming election or any other election feedback, please contact us:

Township of North Dumfries

Email: elections@northdumfries.ca

Phone: 519-632-8800

Mail: 2958 Greenfield Road, P.O. Box 1060, Ayr, ON N0B 1E0

Election Accessibility Plan

1. Consultation Initiatives

- Review comments from electors, candidates, and election workers regarding the 2014 election.
- Consult with Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) early for feedback on potential barriers and methods to overcome these barriers.
- Collaborate with individuals and community groups to increase understanding of providing an accessible election and encourage feedback on this plan.

2. Communication Initiatives

- Provide election information in an accessible format and provide alternative formats upon request and free of charge.
- Provide election information that is informative, clear, and easy to understand.
- A section of the Township's election website will be dedicated to accessibility.
- The Township's election website will receive continuous updates before and throughout the 2018 election.
- Ensuring web pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level AA Compliant.
- Collaborate with disability groups and networks to help disseminate election information through the Township's website, social media, etc.

3. Candidate Initiatives

- Provide candidates with election information on how to make their campaigns accessible and election information that is accessible.
- Candidate information session(s) will be held in an accessible location.
- Making alternative formats for information regarding a candidates' campaign available upon request.
- Provide candidates with accessible resources upon request.

4. Election Help Centre(s) Initiatives

- Inspect election help centre location(s) to ensure all are accessible.
- Ensure election help centre(s) have adequate signage for easy navigation.
- The main entrance to the election help centre(s) will be the accessible entrance.
- Enhance walkability to election help centre location(s) and reduce excessive distances between the parking lot and election help centre location(s).
- Establish voting places at retirement homes and institutions in accordance with the Act (if required) to assist electors.

5. Voting Process Initiatives

- Internet and telephone voting allows electors to cast their ballot from anywhere with an internet connection or telephone, whether the elector is coping with an illness, working days or nights, has a disability or has trouble travelling.

- Internet and telephone voting method allows electors to vote using accessibility features like screen magnifiers, brightness or high contrast views, screen readers, TTY telephone assistance or any other assistive device they may use at home.
- Telephone voting method allows electors to service on all types of touch tone phone and wireless devices, uses clean, plain language, has menu options that are easy to follow advising them to select options/provisions of confirmation of the voters' selection and offers standard volume that can be adjusted depending on the telephone or device being utilized.
- Internet voting method meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), so that persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting system.
- Internet voting method allows electors to use web translation software on their browser if they are more comfortable reading a different language.
- Internet and telephone voting means travelling to a poll is not necessary, but Election Help Center(s) will be available to assist voters.
- Election staff will be trained to assist voters with a disability upon request.
- Notepads will be provided to increase communication to assist electors who are hard of hearing or deafened if required.
- Chairs or stools will be available at election help center(s) for electors waiting in line who cannot stand for a prolonged period.
- Electors will be notified of an emergency or service disruption.

6. Training of Election Officials Initiatives

- Election staff will be trained on the accessible voting options and processes.
- Election staff will be trained on assisting electors with a disability upon request.
- Election staff will be trained not to restrict service persons, or animals who are assisting a person with a disability.
- Election workers will be provided accommodations upon request to ensure training is accessible to all election workers.

7. Post-election Accessibility Report

- After the election, the Township will release a post-election report assessing initiatives to address accessibility barriers and determine if the initiatives can be improved and/or continued in subsequent elections.