

2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

INTRODUCTION

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2018 Municipal Election in the Town of Laurentian Hills.

The Town of Laurentian Hills has made a commitment for the provision of accessible customer service to persons with disabilities for the Municipal election. 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 document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported following the election.

In addition to the Town's Accessibility Standards 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 Town 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 available on the Town's web site.

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.

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

1. Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election were established to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voter's need are to be accommodated whenever possible; and
2. 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.

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 is to 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. 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 Place. In addition, an Election Official in each 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.

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:

Wards 1 and 2 Point Alexander Municipal Hall Auditorium
34465 Highway 17 Point Alexander, Ontario

Wards 3 and 4 Chalk River Lions Hall
11 Kellet Street, Chalk River Ontario

Attendance on electors with disabilities

(8) 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).

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 Legislative Services and/or on the Town's web site. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Municipal staff can administer the oath (Town Hall, 34465 Highway 17 Point Alexander) 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 METHODS

The Town of Laurentian Hills will be using a traditional paper ballot for the 2018 Municipal election.

The voter or the voters support person will be given a ballot that is folded as to keep the secrecy of the ballot, with the Deputy Returning Officer's initials showing on the top. The ballot is to be taken to screened voter's booth to be marked in accordance with the candidate of the voter's choice.

The completed ballot is to be returned to the Deputy Returning Officer folded in the same manner that the ballot was received, with the Deputy Returning Officer's initials showing.

The Deputy Returning Officer will then place the ballot in the sealed ballot box.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Town is required, as per the Accessible Customer Service Standard, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that considers 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 Town 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 Town or is supplied by a third party, the Town 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.

Service Disruptions

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

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 Town's website and election website;
- posted at the site of disruption; and
- where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

ELECTION FEEDBACK

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.

The Town would appreciate your feedback on areas where you feel changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

Please send your comments to cao@laurentianhills.ca or contact the office at 613-584.3114 with your comments.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Municipal Staff

Municipal staff can answer any questions you may have about the election in general or specific provisions for those persons with disabilities.

Town Election website

The Town of Laurentian Hills' website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year. www.laurentianhills.ca

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election website

This website contains information about municipal elections, the Province of Ontario 2018 Municipal Elections Candidates and Voters Guide as well as the Ministry's commitment to promote greater accessibility for electors and candidates with disabilities. www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page219.aspx

Service Ontario – e-Laws

This website contains all current statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. www.ontario.ca/laws

2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION – VOTING LOCATION REVIEW ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT CHECKLIST

Facility Name:	Lions Hall Chalk River Point Alexander Municipal Auditorium
Facility Address:	11 Kellet Street Chalk River
Conducted by:	34465 Highway 17 Point Alexander ON

Elections Returning Officer

	Criteria	Y/ N	Comments
	ENTRANCE		
	Is the main public entrance a barrier free accessible one? (ext. & int.)	Y	
	If not, is there an alternative entrance that is accessible?		
	Is the entrance well lit?	Y	
	Is the entrance easy to see from the parking area?	Y	
	PARKING LOT		
	Is there accessible parking available?	Y	
	Are the accessible parking spots clearly marked with signs and parked on the pavement?	Y	
	RAMPS - Location:		
	Are ramps provided as an alternative to stairs?	N/A	
	Is the slope of the ramp 1:20?	N/A	
	Are handrails provided on both sides of the ramp?	N/A	
	DOORS – Main Entrance		
	Do the doors have a minimum clear width of 860mm (34in) as measured between the door stop and the edge of the door in the 90-degree open position?	Y	
	Are automatic doors provided?	Y	
	If there is NO automatic door: Are lever handles or D-Shaped pulls provided?		
	Are the handles at an appropriate height (mounted between 900mm (35in.)		
	Is there a maneuvering space of 600mm (24in.) on both sides of the door?	Y	
	FLOOR SPACE		
	Are the widths of corridors, hallways and paths wide enough (min 1.2m/4 ft.)?	Y	

2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION – VOTING LOCATION REVIEW ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT CHECKLIST

	Is the path of travel free of furniture or equipment?	Y	
	Is adequate headroom height of minimum 2.03m (6 ft. 8in.) provided? (protruding objects)	Y	
	Is there space for wheelchair seating in the auditorium/ seating area(s)? (such as arena spectator, pool viewing area)	Y	
STAIRS - Location:			
	Are the stair risers closed in?	N/A	
	Is there colour or texture contrasted tread nosing?		
	Handrails are provided on both sides of the stairs?		
ELEVATORS - Location:			
	Do the doors open wide enough to accommodate a person in a wheelchair; at least 915mm (36in)?		
	Do the doors stay open for at least 7 seconds?		
	Are the internal dimensions minimum 1.725m x 1.5 m (5ft 8in x 5ft.)?		
	Are the buttons at an appropriate height (highest button no higher than 1.2m/4ft., lowest button at least 920mm/36in from the floor)?		
	Are the controls or floor buttons raised and done in Braille?		
WASHROOMS			
	Are accessible stall(s) located within the current washroom facilities?	Y	
	If not, is there an accessible washroom(s) available to both males and females?		
	Please indicate the style of entrance into the washrooms with the accessible stalls : Airport style, Automatic, Push door.	Pull/ push Doors	
	Is there a clear turning space of 1.83m (6ft.) in diameter outside the accessible stall ?		
	Is the accessible stall or facility 1.83m x 1.83m (6ft. x 6ft.)?	Y	
	Are grab bars mounted on the wall behind the urinal and on the side wall?	Y	
	Is the toilet flush control automatic or located on the side where the individual would transfer from?	Y	
	Are faucets, fixtures, dispensers and light switches at an appropriate height?	Y	