



2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan

This Plan is for use in the 2018 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Municipality's current Accessibility Plan and IASR Standards.

If you require this document in an alternate format, please contact clerk@loyalist.ca or 613-386-7351 ext.121

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Introduction

In an effort to ensure that the 2018 Municipal Election is consistent with core principals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and current Loyalist Township Accessibility Protocols, this document was created prior to the 2018 elections in order to identify measures to be taken to ensure the 2018 Municipal Elections are accessible.

The plan will address specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2018 Municipal Elections in Loyalist Township and will address the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities as defined by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, SCHED 32.

Under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended Section 12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that election services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience.

This Plan is a “living” document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and opportunity for improvement arises. Staff will continuously review this Plan and review current information regarding providing accessible elections from sources such as the AMCTO, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and neighboring municipalities.

Objectives

Loyalist Township’s 2018 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan will ensure that:

- Individuals with disabilities, without exception, can independently and privately cast their ballot;
- Individuals with disabilities will have full and equal access to all information concerning the 2018 Municipal Election;
- Individuals with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as volunteers, electors and/or candidates;
- Loyalist Township will make the public and candidates aware of accessibility measures available;

- This plan will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

Legislative Requirements

12.1(1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. 2009, c. 33 Sch. 21, s. 8 (8)

12.1(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, *part*.

12.1(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, *part*.

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, Sch., s. 45(1).

45 (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, Sch. 21, s. 8 (23)

Definition of a Disability

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

- (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 in 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.

Disabilities can take many forms, both visible and invisible.

Accessibility Training for Election Staff

Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will complete Accessible Customer Services Training and specific Election Training to comply with the municipal Accessibility Plan and to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs. Staff will be available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election. Accessible Customer Services Training and specific Election Training will include,

- How to interact/communicate with persons with various types of disability;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, require the assistance of a support person or a service animal;
- How to clearly explain internet, telephone and paper voting;
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services; How to provide voter assistance if requested.

Provision of Election Information

Election information will be provided to electors and candidates with disabilities in an alternative format agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk.

Assistance to Voters and Candidates

General

The 2018 Municipal Elections will be held from Monday, October 15, 2018 until Monday, October 22, 2018. Loyalist Township will be offering voters three ways to cast their votes for the 2018 municipal elections, which include internet, telephone and paper voting. Voting by internet or telephone gives voters the opportunity to cast their ballots anytime/anywhere during the election period. Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation. It provides voters with the independence and privacy they would receive voting by paper.

Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2018 Election Procedures Manual, available on the municipal website or from the Clerk's office and

can be provided in an alternative format upon request. Below is an overview of each voting method offered for the 2018 municipal elections in Loyalist Township.

Internet Voting

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their date of birth and PIN and qualifying information, to access the internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter

The Intelivote System has been created to meet 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. It is compliant with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium website principles, which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio.

Telephone Voting

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone, and the toll-free telephone number, date of birth, and PIN number contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot. Voters can register their vote selection with the telephone keypad or voice commands, greatly increasing accessibility, privacy and independence for voters who do not have internet access

Communications barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Barriers may be identified as low volume, use of language that is not clear or plain, and confusing or unorganized menu options. The Intelivote telephone voting application provides the following:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices.
- Clear, plain language.
 - Menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections.
- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized.

In Person Paper Voting

For those individuals without means to access voting via telephone or internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, voters will be able to attend one of four voting locations throughout Loyalist Township on voting day (Monday, October 22, 2018) from 10am to 8pm.

There will be 4 locations available to voters on voting day from 10am to 8pm. Every effort will be made to ensure each voting station is accessible to all voters and staff will

be assessing each voting location prior to voting day, to ensure each voting station is accessible to all voters. The voting locations will be held at the following locations on Monday, October 22, 2018 from 10am-8pm,

1.Amherst Island Fire Station

925 Stella Forty Foot Rd. Stella, ON

2.Amherstview Fire Station

363 Amherst Dr. Amherstview, ON

3.Bath Fire Station

241 Church St. Bath, ON

4.Odessa Municipal Office

263 Main St. Odessa, ON

Parking

Each voting location will have designated parking for individuals with disabilities that are clearly posted and located close to the entrance to the voting area.

Entrance

Each voting location has automatic door opening devices or will be propped open in a safe manner. They are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility devices.

Interior

Access to the interior voting area is level. Carpeting and doormats are level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area is well lit and seating shall be made available.

Accessible Voting Booth

The voting area will be low in height and have a wide area to allow individuals using mobility aids to vote independently and secretively.

Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting area or staff can assist the voter in casting their vote. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance. Voting area staff shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way to provide the assistance.

Service Animals/Support Persons

Any individual voter or candidate is permitted to be accompanied by a service animal and/or support person at all designated election locations.

Accessible Voting Technologies

Each location will also be equipped with a computer for internet voting, and telephones that will assist voters with disabilities in casting their votes with independence and privacy. Staff will be available to assist voters upon request. Support persons and service animals will be accommodated.

Special Voting Provisions

As per section 45(7) of the Municipal Elections Act, a voting place shall be provided on voting day to Institutions with 20 or more beds that are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm and also to Retirement homes that have 50 or more beds occupied. Loyalist Township has two retirement homes (Briargate Retirement Living Centre and The Windsor Retirement Residence) and one Institution (The Helen Henderson care Centre). Of the three facilities only two meet the requirements under Section 45(7) of the Municipal Elections act to provide a voting place.

Section 46(3) of the Municipal Elections act allows for the Clerk to establish reduced voting hours with respects to a voting place described in subsection 45(7) that is only for the use of residents of the institution or retirement home. 2016, c. 15, s.35 (2), *part*.

On Monday, May 14, 2018 Loyalist Township Council passed by-law 2018-062 a by-law to provide for reduced hours of voting in institutions and retirement homes.

1. The following voting place in Ward 3 for The Corporation of Loyalist Township shall be open on voting day, October 22, 2018 between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 11:30 A.M.

Voting Place 11A
Briargate Retirement Living Centre
4567 Bath Road, Amherstview

2. The following voting place in Ward 3 for The Corporation of Loyalist Township shall be open on voting day, October 22, 2018 between the hours of 1:00 P.M. and 2:30 P.M.

Voting Place 12A
Helen Henderson Care Centre
343 Amherst Drive, Amherstview

Service Disruption

The Clerk shall provide public notice on the municipal website and in the local media if there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services. The Notice shall include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service.

Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

Feedback Process

Feedback is encouraged and any received will be reviewed by the Clerk and appropriate action will be taken to remove barriers or provide accommodation if necessary.

Any feedback provided to the Clerk will be summarized in the post-election Election Accessibility Report and will be used to improve accessibility measures in future municipal election.

Alternate Formats

The 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan is available online at www.loyalist.ca/go/loyalistvotes and is also available at 263 Main St. Odessa, ON.

If you require the Loyalist Township 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan in another format, please contact 613-386-7351 ext.121 or clerk@loyalist.ca.

Staff are available throughout the election period to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.