



2026 ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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Introduction

The Accessibility Plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election in the Township of Drummond/North Elmsley.

The Township of Drummond/North Elmsley has made great efforts in promoting a barrier free community. In an effort to ensure that the 2026 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken during the Election process and to be reported to Council following the Election.

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 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.
- That the Voter Revision Centre and Help Center is accessible.

Development of the Plan

This plan is a "living" document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. In order to develop the plan below, several steps were taken to ensure that statutory requirements were met, and a feasible implementation plan was in place. During the development of the 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies and other supporting materials from AMCTO, neighbouring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, technology suppliers and other various stakeholder groups.
- Establish staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated.

Voting Methods

For the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election the Township will be working with Intelivote to provide to eligible voters, internet/telephone voting.

Everyday tools like computers and other aids can present accessible opportunities for persons with disabilities to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

Internet Voting

The Intelivote system provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home through internet/telephone voting. 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.

Additionally, persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes can now use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

By allowing persons with disabilities to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there is an increase in the capability for the voter to vote without any assistance. This provides persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters.

Eligible voters may vote online, standard telephone, a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, along with their PIN and other qualifying information (i.e. possibly date of birth) to access the internet address provided in their Voter Instruction Letter.

For those individuals without means to access voting via the internet from the comfort of their own home, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official, the Revision Centre and Help Centre will also be equipped with areas for in-person internet voting opportunities via a laptop or tablet.

The Intelivote Voting 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.

Voting Location(s)

The Revision Centre and Help Centre will be equipped to facilitate internet/telephone voting using a laptop or tablet. An accessibility assessment will be conducted. For the purpose of this plan, the Revision Centre and Help Centre includes the exterior parking and walkways associated with the location.

Accessible Route to Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the Revision Centre and Help Centre shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, mobile equipment, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely.

Doors into the Revision Centre and Help Centre(s) shall be accessible and easy to open. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at the Revision Centre and Help Centre. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the International Accessibility Symbol and will be on firm and level ground, close to the entrance of the voting location. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the Revision Centre and Help Centre 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.

Accessible Washrooms

The Revision Centre and Help Centre has accessible washrooms.

Voting Assistance

Support Person/Friend of the Voter

People with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at the Revision Centre and Help Centre. 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.

Service Animals

Individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Revision Centre and Help Centre.

Election Officials

A voter who requires such assistance to vote may ask the Election Official for assistance and assist and/or vote as directed by the voter. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector, 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, portable magnifiers, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping at the voting location.

Vision Loss

Each Revision Centre and Help Centre will be equipped with magnifying sheets to assist an individual with low vision. Printed material can be made available in larger font (print) size. Information generated on the website in relation to 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.

Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss

The Revision Centre and Help Centre will be equipped with a pad of paper and pen to communicate with electors with hearing impairments, if required.

Candidate and Registered Third-Party Assistance

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the Revision Centre and Help Centre.

The Township will also work with candidates and/or registered third parties who require mandatory election documents, forms and materials in an alternate format.

In accordance with section 88.20 (8) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, expenses directly related to an individual's disability which would not have been incurred if not for the election, are not subject to the spending limit if they are incurred by a candidate or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability.

Election Official Training

As a requirement under the AODA, all staff members have taken accessibility training, including accessible customer service.

Communication

The 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Municipal Office, 310 Port Elmsley Road, Perth and by way of the Township's website www.dnetownship.ca. Alternative formats will be made available upon request. The Plan will also be provided to all registered Candidates to assist with communicating supports to electors.

Election Materials

The Township 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 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.

General Election Materials

Large Print: Printed material generated by the Township 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 in relation to the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA 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 shall provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

Notice of these temporary disruptions shall be provided in a conspicuous place and manner at the respective location(s) and information shall also be posted on the Township's website. This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include the Revision Centre and Help Centre, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with disabilities at the Revision Centre and Help Centre.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility at the Revision Centre and Help Centre notices of disruption will be posted in real time on the Township's website.

Candidates

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed in order to ensure that they are fully accessible.

Reporting

Pursuant to Section 12.1 (3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, within 90 days after Voting Day, the Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.

The report will be made available to the public via the Municipal website and at the Municipal Office.