



**Oakville
Municipal
Election**

October 27

2014 Municipal Election

Accessibility Plan

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide all candidates and electors with equal opportunity and to ensure a positive involvement in the electoral process.

GOAL

To establish objectives and actions to ensure the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities have been addressed.

References:

Corporate Policy:

The Corporation of the Town of Oakville (hereinafter referred to as the Town) is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities to afford equal opportunities and the provision of integrated programs and services where possible, in a manner that respects dignity and independence.

Municipal Elections Act, 1996 - Sections 12.1 & 45

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

In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is physically accessible to electors with disabilities.

Objectives

1. Review – Identification of Barriers:

Review election process to establish actions that provide accountability and ensure accessibility initiatives are implemented.

Consultation to take place with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons with disabilities to ensure goals and actions are relevant and effective.

Actions		Comments	
1.	Review and gather input on accessibility initiatives from the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).	Consulted with AAC on Thursday, May 8, 2014.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Town's Accessibility Coordinator to provide comments and recommendations on methods to meet accessibility needs.	Consulted with Accessibility Coordinator.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Provide voting information to the Town's Accessibility Advisory Group and request that the information be shared with all user group contacts.	Attended Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting and placed information on committee agenda. Provided voting information to seniors and youth facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Communications and Information – Removal of Barriers

Ensure communication initiatives and information for candidates and electors are available in alternate formats.

Actions	Comments	
1. Post all information to town website.	Provided access to text only information and review in variable formats. Allows users to request documents and forms in alternative formats. Provide results and past election information in Open Data Ongoing throughout 2014	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Provide links and pamphlets to candidates relating to accessible information.	Candidates provided with a link to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections, produced jointly by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerk's and Treasurer's of Ontario (AMCTO) and the Province; - the provincial accessibility website; the Town's Election website; - Customer Service and Integrated Standards Training booklets; and any other related material. <p>Permit access to information in variable formats. Information posted on the website and all candidates provided with accessible links and paper copy of the information.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Establish a web page dedicated to receiving feedback on accessibility initiatives.	Web page established at: http://www.oakville.ca/residents/accessibility.html and http://elections.oakville.ca/accessibility.html	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Actions	Comments	
4. Provide all documentation and forms in large print to assist visually impaired.	All documents and forms are available in an alternate format upon request. Where possible, forms and documents have and will continue to be provided in accessible pdf format on the website.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Assistive groups approached to assist with broadcasting election information to members. Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Canadian Hearing Society, Community Living.	To assist in educating electors of the voting options available to them.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Provide candidates and staff with information relating to accessible customer service and integrated accessibility standard regulation training.	Accessible Customer Service Etiquette and Integrated Accessibility Standards handbooks were provided to every election worker in addition to in person training. The handbooks are also made available in an accessible pdf (electronically) and in paper format for all registered candidates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Provide candidates with supplementary information to ensure a positive campaign for both candidates and electors.	AMCTO's Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections – link to this document provided to candidates (in addition to any other information relating to accessibility). Provided in Candidate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Actions		Comments	
		<p>Guide and on the elections website.</p> <p>The Town of Oakville and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Information (with the City of Burlington) held Candidate Information sessions June 4 and September 4, 2014 which covered the candidate accessibility requirements and the legislation related to candidates with a disability.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Voting Locations:

Ensure all voting locations (facilities) are physically accessible.

Actions		Comments	
1.	Create an accessibility checklist with input from the Town's Architectural Services Coordinator, for election personnel to use when conducting site visits of each voting location.	<p>Checklist created and used to ensure each facility has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ door operators / accessible doors ▪ barrier free parking ▪ accessible ramps and thresholds ▪ a barrier free path of travel from the parking lot ▪ adequate lighting 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Conduct site visits of all potential voting locations to ensure full accessibility. Parking lots and paths to be considered as part of the voting location.	<p>First round of site visits completed in the winter of 2014. Further visits made through July to October 2014 by election staff and officials.</p> <p>The Town's Architectural Services Coordinator attended location site visits.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Actions		Comments	
	The Town's Architectural Services Coordinator will assist in auditing all voting locations for accessible provisions.	Modifications made where possible. Meetings arranged with stakeholders. Voting location owners (Town, school boards and churches) made accessible modifications when requested.	
3.	Run a trial set up of a voting location to determine maximum accessibility.	With the assistance of a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, a mock voting location was set up to determine maximum accessibility (i.e. distance between voting booths, height of tables, etc.). This information was obtained in 2010 and subsequently incorporated into the training of election officials for all voting locations. The same distance and route was confirmed for 2014.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	Provide one central voting location on voting day with accessible voting equipment, in addition to being physically accessible.	Central voting location will be held at Town Hall (Oakville and Trafalgar Rooms) to provide an opportunity for eligible voters with accessibility issues to vote using accessible voting equipment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Address accessibility concerns with the Halton District and Halton Catholic School Boards.	Met with school board representatives to discuss accessibility issues. School Boards made modifications to various voting locations (i.e. having door operators fixed, door thresholds fixed, asphalt repairs done).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Allow voting at any location within a ward to provide flexibility for voters and to enhance accessibility.	Voting at any one location within a voter's ward has been implemented.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Actions		Comments	
7.	Provide appropriate signage at voting locations.	Staff ensured that voting locations and access areas were clearly identified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Service animals and support persons to be permitted in all voting locations.	Election staff training addressed service animals and support persons in addition to customer service. Support persons able to take an oral oath of secrecy prior to assisting an individual in the voting process.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	Set up a process to facilitate notification of any last minute voting location changes, should an emergency occur.	Information available on the following web pages: http://www.oakville.ca/accessibility.htm http://elections.oakville.ca/accessibility.html	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10.	Ensure designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location.	Accessible parking spaces to be clearly marked with the accessibility symbol.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Voting

Ensure equal opportunity for all electors to vote as independently as possible.

Actions		Comments	
1.	Assess voting equipment to ensure it meets the needs of the electorate.	Staff from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (C.N.I.B.) assisted in 2009 by providing feedback and testing accessibility components of voting equipment during the RFP stage. Representatives tested accessibility components and confirmed that they are fully accessible for those with visual impairments and individuals in wheelchairs. The same accessible voting technology was used for the 2014 Municipal Election.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Provide fully accessible equipment at all advance voting locations and at one location (at Town Hall) on voting day.	Equipment supplied with the capability to provide for an audio ballot with the use of the following devices: Braille control, hand or foot paddles, and a sip and puff device.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Provide instructions on use of accessible voting equipment.	Procedures provided on the Town's website and available in print at voting locations. A voter may listen to the audio directions on how to use the equipment. Election staff trained on use of equipment should assistance be required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	Schedule extended advance voting opportunities.	By-law approved to allow for 10 days of advance voting. Advance Voting provided at Town Hall for 10 days, including an additional four locations on	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Actions		Comments	
		the Wednesday to provide an evening voting opportunity and at five additional locations on a Saturday to provide a weekend voting opportunity. Also provided a voting opportunity for students home for the Thanksgiving weekend	
5.	Promote advance voting opportunity for electors with disabilities.	<p>Notice of advance voting and the Town Hall voting day location provided to all Care-a-Van and transit users via public notices and newsletters.</p> <p>CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society and other assistive groups will be requested to broadcast election information to members.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Provide supplies to enable voting for visually impaired.	Magnification screens available at all voting locations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Actions		Comments	
7.	Provide voting opportunities on the premises of: a) an institution in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed; b) a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied.	Voting provided on a reduced hours basis for 1 to 6 hours (depending on size of facility and number of residents) to allow eligible residents of the facility the opportunity to vote in their own home. There were 14 Reduced hours voting locations for the 2014 election. Election staff provided bed side voting where required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Review additional facilities eligible for reduced hours voting.	Locations identified as potential facilities for reduced hours voting reviewed, risk of use assessed. Any that are currently being built have been noted for the 2018 election. Ongoing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	Provide tools to assist with ensuring accessibility as identified.	Accessible tables placed in all advance voting locations and all Town owned facilities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10.	Provide curbside voting at all voting locations, if requested.	Voters advised of option for curbside voting when asking about accessibility. If unable to access the established voting area due to a disability, the Deputy Returning Officer would attend to the Elector anywhere within the voting place, including the parking lot.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11.	Facilitate assisted voting by friends, companions, support persons or election officials (companions).	Companions able to take an oath to assist an elector, when required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Actions		Comments	
12.	Ability to vote by proxy.	Communications and website contained information on voting by proxy. Staff also advised voters seeking voting options of the proxy voting option.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5. Staff Training

Ensure all Election Officials receive election training which shall incorporate accessible customer service and integrated accessibility standards regulation training to provide a positive voting experience.

Actions		Comments	
1	Staff training incorporated provisions to meet accessible customer service and integrated accessibility standards.	Training components as noted below. All staff completed an “Accessibility Compliance Registration Card” for the Town’s records.	
2	Reference materials provided.	Accessible Customer Service Etiquette and Integrated Accessibility Standards handbooks were provided to every staff member. Link to Accessibility of Ontario Directorate website provided to all election staff.	

Training includes:

- a) A requirement to monitor electors concerns and to ensure that their needs are met, i.e. if an individual with a walker is in a long line, staff are to observe, and if it is felt that the elector is having difficulties, offer a chair and ensure that their place is saved in the voting line-up;

- b) A requirement to ensure that electors are aware that magnifiers are available, if required, throughout the day by routinely advising line-ups that may occur;
- c) Direction for election staff to observe electors during discussions with them, and if it appears that the voter is having difficulty understanding, ensuring that the voter is able to clearly see, hear, and understand the speaker;
- d) Encouraging election workers to approach an elector if it appears that the elector requires assistance to get around in the voting location. Offer assistance to help, do not assume an individual needs help;
- e) Ensuring that electors are aware of where the accessible facilities are (i.e. washrooms) and provide greeters to assist and/or direct them should the elector request it;
- f) Election staff will be trained to identify a service animal and to follow the Town's Accessible Customer Service Policy;
- g) Maintaining a friendly and approachable demeanour, regardless of how tired, upset or hassled a worker may feel;
- h) Checking the access doors frequently to offer assistance and watch for electors unable to easily enter the building; and
- i) Ensuring that voters who have self-identified as voting curbside are met in a timely manner.

Original document created January 4, 2014.

Last Updated:
May 5, 2014
November 14, 2014