

Oakville votes

2018 Municipal Election

2018 Municipal Election
Accessibility Plan

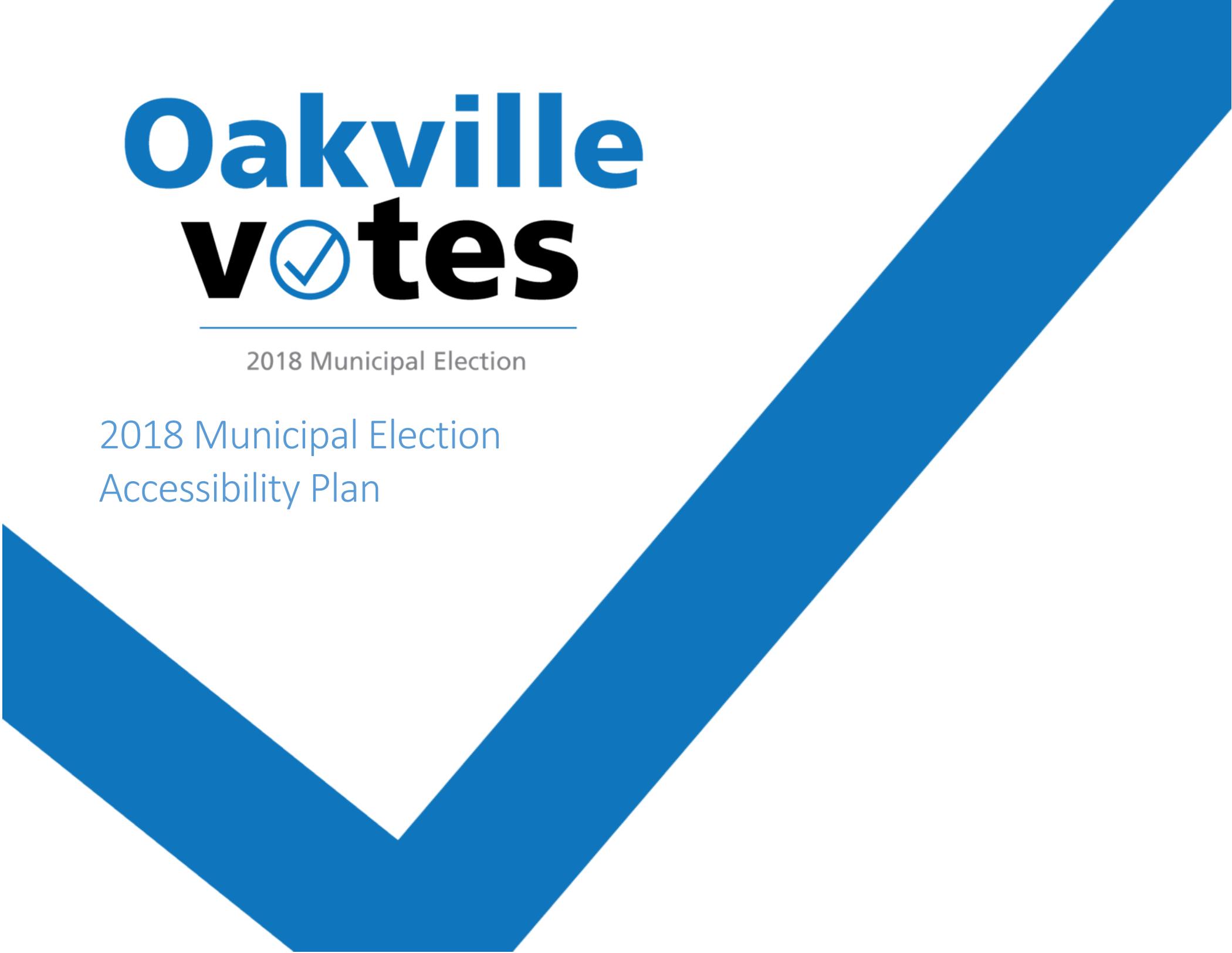


Table of Contents

MISSION STATEMENT	3
GOAL.....	3
CORPORATE POLICY	3
LEGISLATION	3
DEFINITION OF DISABILITY	4
FEEDBACK	4
OBJECTIVES	5
CONSULTATION	5
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION	6
VOTING LOCATIONS	8
VOTING	10
STAFF TRAINING	13

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 of all abilities have been addressed.

Corporate Policy

The Corporation of the Town of Oakville (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.

Legislation

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.
- (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.
- (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.

Section 45 (2)

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

Last updated

Version 1 – November 2017

Definition of 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 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*.

Feedback

The Town Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes can improve the delivery of an accessible election. This plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes. Please provide us with your feedback on how we can make changes to this plan:

Email: elections@oakville.ca

Phone: 905-815-6015

By Mail: Town of Oakville
 Clerk’s department
 1225 Trafalgar Road
 Oakville, Ontario L6H 0H3

Should you require this information in a different format, please let us know.

Objectives

Consultation

Consultation with individuals and groups provide greater knowledge and understanding in conducting elections that are accessible to all. Review election process to establish actions that provide accountability and ensure accessibility initiatives are implemented.

Initiative	Actions	Status
<p>1. Consultation to take place with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons of all abilities and backgrounds to ensure goals and actions are relevant and implemented effectively.</p>	<p>Accessibility initiatives to be presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) for review and comment.</p>	<p>1st quarter 2018</p>
	<p>Other groups to consult/inform include: C.N.I.B., Halton Multicultural Group, senior and youth facilities.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Attend meetings and events to demonstrate accessible voting options and raise awareness of the 2018 election.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Conduct post-election evaluation of feedback on accessibility initiatives.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Town’s Accessibility Coordinator to provide comments and recommendations on methods to meet accessibility needs.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	

Communications and Information

Ensure effective communication initiatives for candidates and electors to ensure election information is accessible and available in alternative formats.

Initiative	Actions	Status
1. Ensuring all relevant election information pertinent to voters and candidates is posted to the election website (elections.oakville.ca).	Access to information will be provided and made available in alternative formats, where requested. Accessible PDFs will be posted where possible. Information posted on the website and all candidate documents provided with accessible links, with paper copy of the information available upon request.	On-going
	Results and past election information provided in Open Data.	On-going
2. Provide candidates and staff with information relating to accessible customer service and integrated accessibility standard regulation training.	<p>The town's election website will provide candidates links to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the town's Candidate Guide; • the 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 Customer Service and Integrated Standards Training booklets; • any other related material. <p>Accessible Customer Service Etiquette and Integrated Accessibility Standards handbooks 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.</p>	On-going

Initiative	Actions	Status
3. Establish a web page dedicated to receiving feedback on accessibility initiatives.	The established town page will be utilized, election team to ensure efficiencies of service: www.oakville.ca/residents/accessibility.html and http://elections.oakville.ca/accessibility.html	On-going
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 will be provided in accessible pdf format on the website.	On-going
5. Outreach to assistive groups to request assistance with broadcasting election information to members. Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Canadian Hearing Society, Community Living.	Educating electors of the voting options available to them.	On-going
6. Provide candidates with supplementary information to ensure a positive campaign for both candidates and electors.	Candidate information sessions to be held in 2018 which will cover the candidate accessibility requirements and the legislation related to candidates with a disability.	3 rd quarter 2018

Voting Locations

Initiative	Actions	Status
<p>1. Ensure all voting places are accessible to electors with disabilities.</p>	<p>Review and update existing accessibility checklist, with input from Building Services staff and the town’s Accessibility Coordinator, as required, for election personnel to use when conducting site visits of each voting location.</p>	<p>1st Quarter 2018</p>
	<p>Checklist 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; - seating, should the distance of travel from the entrance to the voting location require it. 	<p>1st Quarter 2018</p>
	<p>Conduct site visits of all voting locations, including parking lots and paths, to ensure full accessibility.</p>	<p>2nd Quarter 2018</p>
	<p>Contact and advise voting location owners (Town, school boards and churches) to make accessible modifications as necessary. Modifications made to voting locations to make them accessible.</p> <p>Address any location accessibility concerns with school board representatives.</p>	<p>2nd Quarter 2018</p>
	<p>Staff to ensure that voting locations and access areas are clearly identified.</p>	

Initiative	Actions	Status
2. Voting location set up to determine maximum accessibility.	In 2014, a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, assisted in reviewing a mock voting location set up to assess maximum accessibility (i.e. distance between voting booths, height of tables, etc.). The same set up established in 2014 will be utilized for 2018 and will form part of the training of election officials.	3 rd Quarter 2018
3. Provide one central voting location on voting day and during advance voting with accessible voting equipment, in addition to being physically accessible.	Central voting location will be held at Town Hall to provide an opportunity for eligible voters with accessibility issues to vote using accessible voting equipment.	4 th Quarter 2018
4. 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 was implemented in 2014 and will be offered for the 2018 election.	On-going
5. Service animals and support persons to be permitted in all voting locations.	Election staff training to address 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.	On-going
6. Set up a process to facilitate notification of any last minute voting location changes, should an emergency occur.	In addition to social media outlets, information available on the following web pages: http://www.oakville.ca/accessibility.htm and http://elections.oakville.ca/accessibility.html	On-going

Voting

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

Initiatives	Actions	Status
<p>1. Provide accessible voting equipment and proper instructions, ensure it meets the needs of electors.</p>	<p>Provide accessible equipment at one location (Town Hall) during all advance voting days and 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.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Staff from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (C.N.I.B.) assisted in 2009 by providing feedback and testing of accessibility components of voting equipment during the RFP stage. Representatives tested accessibility components and confirmed that they are accessible for those with visual impairments and individuals in wheelchairs. The same accessible voting technology was used in 2014 and will again be used for the 2018 Municipal Election.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Provide instructions on use of accessible voting equipment. Procedures provided on the town’s website and available in print at Town Hall. 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.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>2. Schedule extended advance voting opportunities.</p>	<p>Advance voting provided prior to voting day including both evening and weekend options at multiple locations. Full list of advance voting locations will be posted on the website and will be provided on voter information notices.</p>	<p>3rd/4th Quarter 2018</p>

Initiatives	Actions	Status
3. Promote advance voting opportunity for electors with disabilities.	<p>Notice of advance voting and the Town Hall voting day location to be provided to all Care-a-Van and transit users via public notices, newsletters, and social media.</p> <p>CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society and other assistive groups will be requested to broadcast election information to members.</p>	On-going
4. Provide accessible voting options.	Provide curbside voting at all voting locations, if requested. If a voter is unable to access the established voting area, the election official may attend to the elector anywhere within the voting place, which includes the parking lot.	3 rd /4 th Quarter 2018
	Facilitate assisted voting by friends, companions, support persons or election officials. Individual assisting voter will be required to take an oath to assist an elector.	3 rd /4 th Quarter 2018
	Provide supplies to enable voting for visually impaired – magnification screens available at all voting locations.	3 rd /4 th Quarter 2018
	Ability to vote by proxy. Communications and website to contain information on voting by proxy. Staff to be trained on providing information on voting by proxy and processing proxy voters.	On-going
	Transit passes to be available for voters who require assistance getting to a voting location.	On-going

Initiatives	Actions	Status
<p>5. In accordance with section 45(7) of the <i>Municipal Elections Act</i>, provide voting opportunities at institutions and retirement homes.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Election staff to provide bed side voting where required.</p>	<p>On-going</p>

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.

Initiatives	Actions	Status
1. Staff training to incorporate provisions to meet accessible customer service and integrated accessibility standards.	Training components as noted below. All staff to complete an “Accessibility Compliance Registration Card” for the town’s records.	On-going
	Reference materials to be provided. An Accessible Customer Service Etiquette handbook will be provided to every staff member. Link to Accessibility of Ontario Directorate website provided to all election staff.	On-going

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;
- c) Direction for election staff to observe electors during discussions with them, and if it appears that the voter is having difficulty understanding, work with the voter in any manner they are comfortable with, to ensure their needs are met;
- 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 (where applicable) 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 Procedure;
- g) Maintaining a friendly and approachable demeanour;
- 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.