

Municipality of Leamington
2026

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

VOTE



Municipality of
Leamington
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please contact the Clerk's Office:
phone: 519-326-5761 email: clerks@leamington.ca**

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Legislative Requirements	3
Objectives	4
Definitions.....	5
Disability	5
Barriers.....	5
Development of the Plan	6
Elections Communication and Information	7
Election Materials	7
a) Alternative Formats.....	7
Website	7
Service Disruption	8
Voting Location	8
Accessible Route.....	9
Entrance and Exit.....	9
Parking	9
Interior Voting Area.....	9
Voting Methods	10
Voting Assistance	10
Accessible Voting System	11
Proxy Voting	11
Institutions and Retirement Homes.....	11
Home Voting Service.....	12
Employment and Training	12
Employment Process.....	12
Training	12
Assistance to Candidates.....	13
Post Election Report.....	13
Feedback.....	13
Additional Information	14

Introduction

The Municipality of Leamington is committed to ensuring that the municipal election is accessible to all. As such, this 2026 Election Accessibility Plan was created with the primary objective of identifying and eliminating barriers to full participation for all electors, candidates, election officials, and volunteers for the 2026 municipal election.

Legislative Requirements – Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended

The Clerk is responsible for conducting the municipal and school board election and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the election.

The following excerpts from the Municipal Elections Act (the “Act”) define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities:

Accessibility Plan

12.1 (2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affects 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

12.1 (3) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal or prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public. 2016, c. 15, s. 20 (1).

Visual Impairment

41 (3) of the Act states that 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).

Accessible Location

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

Voting Place – Institutions

45 (8) The deputy returning officer for a voting place described in subsection (7) may attend on an elector who is a resident of the institution or retirement home, to allow him or her to vote.

Attendance on Elector

45 (9) To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a deputy returning officer shall attend the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place.

Objectives

The Plan is intended to highlight measures that the Municipality of Leamington will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- election policies and procedures comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), are consistent with the principles of the Act, and must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- all voting locations are physically accessible;
- persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection;
- persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- electors and candidates living with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures that are available;
- persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate, or election official;
- 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 Municipality of Leamington’s website and social media;
- persons with disabilities who are potential employees will be accommodated and supported through the hiring process; and
- proper accessibility training will be provided to all workers who participate in the election.

Definitions

i) **Disability**

The AODA and Ontario Human Rights Code define disability as meaning:

- 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- A Mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and /Insurance Act, 1997.

ii) **Barriers**

Under the AODA, a barrier is defined as “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability.”

Many different types of barriers may exist including:

Attitudinal:

Barriers that result when people think, and act based on false assumptions.

Example: a receptionist who talks to an individual’s support person because they assume the individual with a disability will not understand.

Information and Communication:

Barriers created when information is offered in only one way.

Example: Documents with print that is too small or in a font that is difficult to read.

Technological:

Barriers occur when technology, or the way it is used, cannot be accessed by people with disabilities.

Example: websites that are not accessible to people who are blind and require the use of screen reader software.

Physical and Architectural:

Physical barriers or obstacles that make it difficult for some people to easily access a location.

Example: a hallway or door that is too narrow to allow a person who uses a wheelchair to pass through safely.

Organizational:

Occur when policies, practices or procedures result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded.

Example: a hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities.

Development of the Accessibility Plan (the “Plan”)

When developing this Plan, considerations were made to ensure that all legislated requirements are met and that a suitable implementation Plan is in place.

The following steps were taken:

- review and analysis of documents, policies and other supporting materials from the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), Elections Ontario, neighboring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, technology suppliers and other various stakeholder groups;
- establishing 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; and
- consultation and Plan review with the Municipality’s Accessibility Advisory Committee.

This Plan is a living document, which can be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

Key Areas of Focus for the Election Process

Five key areas of focus were identified within the election process to prevent and remove accessibility barriers:

1. elections communication and information;
2. voting location(s);
3. voting methods;
4. accessibility training for election officials; and
5. assistance for candidates;

Elections Communication and Information

The Municipality of Leamington is committed to ensuring that communications and information is shared in a manner that is accessible for all electors.

The 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Municipality of Leamington Office, and by way of the Municipality of Leamington website www.learmington.ca. Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

Election Materials

The Municipality of Leamington will ensure election information is accessible to all by providing said information in clear, straightforward language, in alternative formats, where requested and through multiple channels.

Information sheets will be produced and posted with instructions on how to vote and how to utilize the voting assistant tools. These sheets will be available on the accessibility webpage.

The Municipality will also present information about election accessibility to stakeholder and community organizations, provide candidates with a document on how to run an accessible campaign, and provide any organizations conducting a candidate debate with a document on how to hold an accessible event. Further, communications and information materials will be provided to members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and identification of potential barriers.

a) Alternative Formats

Alternative formats are other ways of accessing information besides regular print—such as large print, recorded audio, braille, or accessible PDF.

In the event the information was not generated by the Municipality of Leamington or is supplied by a third party, the Municipality will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format.

i) Large Print

Printed material generated by the Municipality of Leamington will be provided in Arial font, 12 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger, upon request.

Website

The Municipality of Leamington will continuously update election information posted on the Municipality's website (learmington.ca/election) to reflect the most recent

information and developments. Language and information will be provided in a clear and easy-to-understand manner.

Information generated by the Municipality on the website 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.

A webpage dedicated to accessibility for the 2026 election will be published on the website as well. Available on the page will be access to this Plan, as well as information on the accessibility of voting locations, accessible voting technologies, and other frequently asked questions regarding election accessibility.

The Municipality will also establish an easy access website link to an accessibility feedback form so an elector who encounters an accessibility issue can contact election staff before Voting Day, October 26, 2026.

Service Disruption

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Municipality'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 Municipality of Leamington 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 Municipality of Leamington 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 voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for electors with disabilities at the voting place.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the advance vote or on Election Day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time on the Municipality of Leamington website and election webpage.

Voting Location(s)

In establishing the locations of voting places, the Clerk has ensured that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. An accessibility assessment of each

physical polling station was conducted and the following considerations were taken into account when determining which location(s) were to be used:

Accessible Route

The name and/or address of the voting location shall be clearly visible from the street and sidewalk and an easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and area. The route to the voting location shall have level or ramped entrances for accessible access.

The voting area shall be identified with clear and understandable signage and seating areas shall be provided throughout the voting location for individuals needing a rest.

Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the voting location shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely. An election official will be present to offer assistance at the voting location entrance, should an elector require it.

Doors into the voting location and voting area shall be accessible with an automatic door opener or shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at all voting locations. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked and will be on firm and level ground close to the entrance of the voting location. Election officials will monitor parking at voting locations throughout the day. Additional temporary accessible parking spaces may be provided to identified locations with limited designated accessible spaces.

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 and there shall be enough space inside the area for a wheelchair to move easily. All voting areas are to be well lit, and seating will be made available.

Accessible washrooms will be available nearby and will be clearly identified with signage.

Voting Methods

The Municipality of Leamington will be conducting the 2026 municipal and school board election by way of in-person voting. The Municipality will be using a composite paper ballot on which electors choose their preferred candidate(s) by placing a mark, with a marker, in the circle next to the name of the chosen candidate(s). Once marked, the ballot is taken to the Tabulator Deputy Returning Officer who inserts the marked ballot within the secrecy folder into the tabulator. The detailed voting process is outlined in the Clerk's Election Procedures.

Voting Assistance

The Municipality of Leamington will provide people with disabilities with accessible voting methods and accommodation, as required.

Support person – people with disabilities will be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any voting location. A designated support person will be administered an oath of secrecy and confidentiality prior to providing assistance.

Service animals – electors and candidates are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

Election officials – the Clerk or designated election official can also assist a voter in completing their ballot. In this instance, prior to entering the designated area, the person with the disability and the Clerk or designated election official will determine the extent to which assistance is needed and the best way it may be provided. This may include marking the ballot as directed by the elector, if requested. All individuals working in the capacity of an election official are formally appointed and take an oath of secrecy

Each voting location will be equipped with assistive supplies such as:

- magnifying sheets to assist electors with low vision;
- pictures of candidates;
- large grip pens;
- note pads and pens to assist communication with electors who have a hearing impairment; and
- reader glasses.

Accessible Voting System

The AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals (VAT) will be available at designated locations on advanced polling dates as well as voting day. The AutoMARK gives voters with special needs the ability to mark their ballots independently and privately.

AutoMARK includes audio tactile interface for hearing impaired voters. Foot paddles and Sip-and-Puff assistive technology will also be available for voters unable to use the touch screen or touch pad and allow them to vote autonomously.

The AutoMARK system will be available at two polling stations on Election Day and during advanced polling at the identified location.

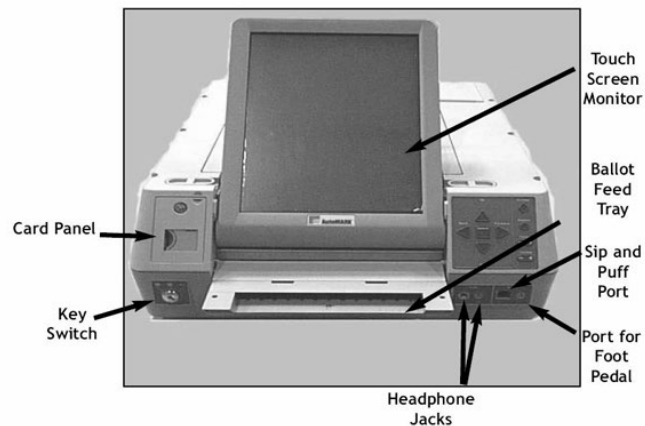


Figure 1 – AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal.

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 their behalf. See the Clerks' Procedures for additional information on Proxy Voting.

Institutions and Retirement Homes

The Act mandates that the Municipality attend institutions (long-term care facilities and retirement homes) in the Municipality of Leamington to serve those electors.

45 (7) On voting day, a Voting Place shall be provided on the premises of the following:

An institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of members or former members of the Canadian Forces;

An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm;

A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied.

As such, the Municipality will provide voting opportunities in institutions and retirement homes by arranging for election officials to attend the above-mentioned facilities in order to allow eligible residents of the facility the opportunity to vote.

The Municipality will also have election staff provide bedside voting, where needed.

Home Voting Service

The Municipality of Leamington will offer a vote-from-home assistance program for those electors who are home-bound due to illness, injury or disability. Home-bound electors can participate in the municipal election by voting independently in their homes. Election officials will visit the elector's home with the necessary materials including a paper ballot and secrecy envelope. Electors interested in this option will need to request an appointment by contacting the Clerk's Office. Home visits shall take place during "Vote from Home Program Service Hours", as defined in the Clerk's Procedures.

Employment and Training for Election Officials

The Municipality of Leamington is committed to ensuring that recruiting and staffing practices are accessible and that staff are trained and supported to provide accessible customer service.

Employment Process

During the recruitment process for election staff and election officials, the Municipality will advise employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities.

The Municipality will notify applicants when they are individually selected to participate further in the selection process, that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.

If a selected job applicant requests accommodation relating to their participation in the hiring process, the Municipality will consult with the individual and provide or arrange for the provision of suitable accommodation that considers the applicant's disability-related needs.

When making offers of employment, the Municipality will notify successful applicants of our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Training

All staff carrying out election duties will be trained under the Municipality's Accessible Customer Service Standards Policy to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Training will include:

- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- how to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services; and
- what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

The Municipality will also develop and make available reference materials for all election officials highlighting how to serve voters with disabilities by including AODA, Customer Service Standards, and serving people with disabilities messaging in all training materials.

Assistance to Candidates

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. The Municipality of Leamington will provide candidates with information on how to make their campaigns more accessible. This includes providing links to accessible election information produced by the Province, such as Accessible Campaign Information and Communication, as well as including the AMCTO's Candidate Guide to Accessible Elections within the nomination packages. The Municipality will also ensure that the candidates themselves have access to information in an accessible manner, such as ensuring information provided may be offered in an alternative format, upon request. In addition, all candidate information sessions will be in an accessible location or video recorded, for viewing afterwards at a remote location.

Post-Election Report

Following the election, the Clerk will report to Council following on the outcomes and performance of the 2026 Accessible Election Plan. The Clerk's post-election report will be posted on the Municipality's website in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and distributed to disability groups and other stakeholders, upon request.

Feedback

The Clerk's Department welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Municipality can improve the delivery of an accessible Election. The Election Accessibility Plan is a living document and shall continue to undergo changes.

To provide feedback so we know how to best provide an accessible election, you may contact the Clerk at:

Email: clerks@leamington.ca

Phone: 519-326-5761

By mail: Clerk's Office, 111 Erie St North, Leamington ON N8H 2Z9

By attending in person at the Clerk's Office located at 111 Erie St North, Leamington ON N8H 2Z9 (appointment required).

You can also provide feedback through the online [Accessibility Feedback Form](#) available at leamington.ca/election.

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

Additional Information

Clerk's Department

The staff in the Clerk's Department can answer any questions you may have about running for office, the election in general, or specific provisions for persons with accessibility needs.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

The Ministry's website contains information about municipal elections, including a Candidates' Guide and a Voter's Guide.

e-Laws

Current statutes for the Province of Ontario can be found on the e-Laws website (ontario.ca/laws). Statutes pertaining to municipal elections and accessibility include the following:

- Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005