

Town of Aylmer Post-Election Accessibility Report

Report Title:	Post-Election Accessibility Report
Date:	January 19, 2019
Report Author:	Josh Brick, Director of Legislative Services/ Clerk

Report Introduction

The Town of Aylmer was committed to making the 2018 Municipal Election accessible by working to accommodate the needs of electors by removing barriers to vote for persons with disabilities.

The focus of the Post-Election Accessibility Report is to evaluate the accessibility of the electoral services offered to all electors and candidates in the 2018 Municipal Election. This report outlines the various initiatives undertaken during the 2018 Municipal Election regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Post-Election Report

In accordance with Section 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Clerk shall provide a report, within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with accessibility needs. The report will be available to the public and posted on the Town's website in an accessible format.

Leading up to the election, an Election Accessibility Plan (the "Plan") was developed. Upon completion, the proposed plan was presented to and approved by Council on November 5, 2018. The Plan is attached to this report as Appendix A. The 2018 Plan guides the provision of election related services to persons with disabilities. The Plan was designed to respect the dignity and independence of electors and candidates and ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

The following are the various initiatives undertaken by the Town of Aylmer during the 2018 Municipal Election:

- Alternative Voting, in the form of internet and telephone voting provided electors with the ability to cast their ballot from home and at their convenience. Alternatively, electors were able to cast a ballot at the Voter Help Centre, where Election Officials were trained as per Procedure 2.14

(b) of the Town of Aylmer Accessibility Policy and available to provide support as needed. These alternative streams allowed increased rights of privacy to electors with disabilities whom may find voting at traditional paper-based voting locations more difficult, as they had the ability to vote with little or no assistance required from others.

- Election Officials made electors aware of the availability of assistance. Election Officials and staff were positioned to greet electors as they entered the Voter Help Centre and assist them as necessary.
- Election-related assistance was available both in-person and remotely. More specifically, electors were able to receive assistance from an Election Official at the Voter Help Centre, could call the designated Election Assistance phone-line or send an email to the designated Election Assistance email address.
- Election information was communicated through various channels and alternative formats including newspaper, website and radio. For election-related inquiries or feedback, all residents were able to contact Town of Aylmer Election Staff in-person (during the advertised Voter Help Centre hours of operation) or via telephone or email.
- Election staff ensured that all information was made available to candidates and voters in alternate formats upon request. No such requests were received.
- Extended office hours were provided closer to the election to assist those residents who were not able to visit the Municipal Officer (Voter Help Centre) during regular business hours.
- In the months leading up to the election, Election Officials contacted retirement homes to determine mutually convenient dates to attend at their facilities to assist residents get added to or make changes to the Voters' list and cast their ballots. These locations included Aylmer Retirement Residence and Chartwell Retirement Residence.
- Throughout the Voting Period, accessible equipment was made available for electors to utilize. This included two 15-inch laptops, two 10.9-inch iPads and a standard telephone for electors to use.
- The following considerations were taken into account with regard to the Voter Help Centre:
 - **Accessible Route:** The name and address of the Voter Help Centre was clearly visible. The route through the entrance to the Voter Help Centre was marked and the Voter Help Centre Area

was marked with clear and understandable signage. Seating areas were provided throughout the location for individuals needing a rest.

- **Entrance and Exit:** The route to the entrance of the Voter Help Centre location was unobstructed and accessible. The route was wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely. Doors into the location were accessible and easy open, with an automatic “push” door opener also being available. Routine checks of entrance and exist routes were made throughout the hours of operation.
- **Parking:** Accessible parking was available at the Voter Help Centre. The designated parking spaces were clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and were on firm and level ground.
- **Support Person/ Friend of the Voter:** Pursuant to the Town of Aylmer Accessibility Policy (#2.14) and Procedure 2.14(e) re: accessibility support persons, people with disabilities were permitted to be accompanied by a support person at the Voter Help Centre. An oral oath of secrecy/ confidentiality was administered by an Election Official to facilitate this process.
- **Service Animals:** Pursuant to the Town of Aylmer Accessibility Policy (#2.14) and Procedure 2.14(D) re: Service Animals in the Workplace, individuals requiring service animals were permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the Voter Help Centre.

Feedback

Throughout the election period and for several weeks following, a feedback survey was made available where residents were able to provide feedback regarding the accessibility of the 2018 Municipal Election. No feedback was received through this method.

Public feedback about the manner in which election services were provided to persons with accessible needs may be submitted to the Director of Legislative Services/ Clerk through a variety of methods:

Telephone: 519-773-3164 ext. 4911

Email: jbrick@town.aylmer.on.ca

Mail or in person: 46 Talbot Street W, Aylmer, ON N5H 1J7

The feedback process provides Election Staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alterative methods of providing election services.

Original Signed By

Josh Brick, Director of Legislative Services/ Clerk

Town of Aylmer



**Town of Aylmer
Human Resources Procedure**

Procedure Title:	Accessibility Election Plan
Procedure#:	2.14 - H
Associated Policy:	Accessibility Policy – 2.14
Date Approved:	November 5, 2018
Date Last Revision:	November 5, 2018

Purpose:

To meet the requirements under the Municipal Elections Act, the Clerk is required to prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O.Reg 191/11), Design of Public Spaces Standard (Section 80.44) Maintenance of Accessible Elements.

Practices:

To ensure that election processes are consistent with the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, this policy/plan is in place in order to identify measures to be taken and reported to Council following an election process.

Objectives:

The Town's Accessibility Policy 2.14 sets out the Town's commitment to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for people with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. The full policy and procedures are included in Policy 2.14 inclusive of Procedures A-H and can be found on the Town's website at www.aylmer.ca or by contacting the municipal office.

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Town of Aylmer will be implementing 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 how and when to vote.
- 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 Town of Aylmer website.
- That all voting assistance locations are accessible and have Election Officials available for assistance.

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 the statutory requirements were met, and a feasible implementation plan was in place. During the development of Municipal Election Accessibility Plans, the following steps shall be implemented:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies and other supporting materials from AMCTO, neighboring municipalities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, 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:

The 2018 Town of Aylmer Municipal Election will be working with a service provider to allow for alternate voting for all eligible voters. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via telephone or internet during the voting period.

Everyday tools like computers, telephones 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.

Alternate voting methods (i.e. internet and telephone) provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home. 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. If persons with disabilities do require assistance in the voting process, trained Election Officials will be available at appointed voting assistance locations, throughout the voting period.

Telephone Voting:

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone to access an audio ballot. 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 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.

Internet Voting:

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device, gaming device or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, to access the appropriate platform for electronic voting.

The internet voting system is 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.

Special Voting Provisions:

Election staff shall visit sites including long-term care facilities and retirement homes, to set-up on-site voting kiosks, or bedside voting opportunities for residents. These

provisions will be made the Municipal Clerk in consultation with the staff of the facility and have regard to the Objectives set out in the objectives of this procedure.

Voter Help Centre:

An accessibility assessment of the Voter Help Centre will be conducted. The following considerations are taken into account:

Accessible Route

The name and/or address of the Voter Help Centre shall be clearly visible. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the building and the location designated as the Voter Help Centre. The Voter Help Centre area shall be identified with clear and understandable signage and seating areas shall be provided throughout the location for individuals needing a rest.

Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the Voter Help Centre 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. Doors into the location shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the location hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at the Voter Help Centre. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and will be on firm and level ground.

Voting Assistance:

Support Person/Friend of the Voter

Pursuant to the Town of Aylmer Accessibility Policy (#2.14) and Procedure 2.14 E re accessibility support persons, people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at any voting location/Voter Help Centre. A designated support person and/or 'Friend of the Voter' will be administered an Oral oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

Service Animals

Pursuant to the Town of Aylmer Accessibility Policy 2.14 and Procedure 2.14 – D re Service Animals in the Workplace, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the voting locations/Voter Help Centre.

Election Officials

Election Officials are available to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their online ballot or casting their telephone ballot. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day.

Any person acting as an Election Official per Procedure 2.14 B of the Accessibility Policy will be required to complete accessibility training using the Town's accessibility training modules.

Communication:

The 2018 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan will be made available at the Municipal Office, 46 Talbot Street West, Aylmer, ON and by way of the Town of Aylmer web site www.aylmer.ca Alternative formats will be made available upon request.

Election Materials

The Town of Aylmer is required, as per the Accessibility Policy 2.14 and Procedure 2.14 C re accessible formats and communication supports, 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 Town of Aylmer and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Town of Aylmer or is supplied by a third party, the Town of Aylmer will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or will attempt to assist the Elector by providing assistive equipment.

General Election Materials

Large Print – Printed material generated by the Town of Aylmer will be provided in an Arial font, minimum 11 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website – Information generated by the Town of Aylmer 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.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Town of Aylmer 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 Town of Aylmer, per the Accessibility Policy 2.14 and its Procedure 2.14 – F re Accessibility Temporary Service Disruptions, 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 Town of Aylmer website. This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, a description of alternative facilities or services, if available and contact information.

Accessible services in relation to this plan include voting places, Voter Help Centre, election materials and/or other voting provisions for Electors with disabilities.

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. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario is a good source of information. The Directorate along with AMCTO has released a quick reference document to assist candidates with accessible elections called “A Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections.” A copy will be provided in the Candidates’ Information Packages.

Feedback:

The Town of Aylmer welcomes public input as feedback helps to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve its services to people with disabilities. The Town’s Accessibility Policy and Procedure 2.14 – A provide a process for feedback on accessibility issues.

Reporting:

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, within 90 days after voting day, the Town of Aylmer Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.



Town of Aylmer
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(519) 773-3164

Report Title: Report HR 98-18 – Annual Accessibility Plan
Status Report

Submitted for: November 12, 2018

Report Author: Jennifer Reynaert, CAO/Deputy Clerk

Recommendation:

That Council receives Report 98-18 entitled Annual Accessibility Plan Status Report for information.

Background and Analysis:

The Town of Aylmer is required and committed to prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategies outlined in the multi-year accessibility plan.

Highlights of the status report for 2018 include;

- adoption of an Accessibility Election Plan Procedure (adopted by Council November 5, 2018).
- training for staff related to accessible WORD and PDF documents in January 2018.
- a grant application has been made under Ontario's Main Streets Revitalization Initiative for an updated sound system at Old Town Hall Theatre that will provide assistive listening devices as well as the addition of benches along the Aylmer trail system to assist individuals with limited mobility using the trails.
- a grant application has been made for Trans Canada Trail – CIP 2019-2020 to update the Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan that includes the expansion of the Trans Canada Trail system. These updates will fully incorporate and address AODA standards in recreations and specifically as it related to trail expansion.

The attached status report for the Town of Aylmer will continue to remove barriers to people with disabilities. Efforts made are communicated to Council

through the development of a multi-year accessibility plan and annual status report.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Jenny Reynaert, CAO/Deputy Clerk



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Town of Aylmer
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
2017-2020

Accessibility Plan and Policies for the Town of Aylmer

The purpose of this 2017-20 accessibility plan is to make the public aware of the Town's progress with accessibility implementation and to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the AODA. The Town of Aylmer is committed to provide an inclusive workplace, environment and community.

Compliance Reporting

The Town of Aylmer filed its fourth Accessibility Compliance Report in 2017 with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario under the Ministry of Economic Development Trade and Employment Services.

Statement of Commitment

The Town of Aylmer is committed to removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing our goods, services and facilities. The Town of Aylmer recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all. The Town is committed to being responsive to the needs of all residents and employees. The Town's Corporate Accessibility Policy (HR 2.14) was updated on June 5, 2017 and Accessibility Procedures were developed and adopted (HR 2.14, A, B, C, D, E, F and G) to reflect changes made to the Integrated Accessibility Standards. Accessibility Election Procedures were developed and adopted (HR 2.14, H) to integrate a accessible election procedures and plans to the Town of Aylmer main accessibility plan.

In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities the Town will:

- Ensure policies address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- Allow people with disabilities to use their own personal devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Town.
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use or benefit from the Town's goods, services, programs and facilities.
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that considers the person's disability.

The Town will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the Accessibility or Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Timelines for compliance vary and to ensure timelines are met, the Town will establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The plan outlines the Town's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities. There are several other categories of barriers to consider such as:

Environmental Barriers

Features, buildings or spaces that restrict or impede physical access. The Town will focus removing barriers which may exist in our buildings and facilities and will ensure that new buildings, leases and renovations do not create any new barriers. The Town of Aylmer continues to make application for grants that upgrade and improve physical features within Town owned facilities.

Communication and Information Barriers

Obstacles with processing, transmitting or interpreting information. The Town will continue to ensure that communications are available to all residents in our community. Town of Aylmer is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs. The Town monitors and tests the web page annually to ensure it conforms with WCAG 2.0 standards.

Town of Aylmer ensures contact information on our web page is available for providing feedback and provides staff contact information to assist people with disabilities obtain information they require in accessible format best individually suited. A form is provided on the website to request desired information and a notice is posted on the website that accessible formats are provided upon request. Staff have developed and utilized reports that go to Council in accessible format to ensure information continues to be provided in accessible format.

Town of Aylmer will require to convert internal documents posted to the web site

(reports, By-Laws, etc.) from 2012 to present. Resources will be required in coming budget years to undergo the conversion process.

Attitudinal Barriers

Prejudgments or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate. The Town will continue to promote accessibility standards to ensure attitudes promote access to services to all residents.

Technological Barriers

Occur when technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices and/or software. Communications and the Town's web site will continue to be in accessible format and made available in a format that is accessible when requested.

Systematic Barriers

Occurs when barriers within an organization's policies, practices and procedures do not consider accessibility. The Town will continue to develop and review policies and procedures that consider accessibility in our community.

Accessible Emergency Information

The Town of Aylmer is committed to providing the customers and clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

Training

The Town of Aylmer provides training to employees and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees and volunteers. On-going compliance with the Customer Service Standard and training for staff on the Customer Service Standard continues. Training materials are available on the Town's web page and has become a part of the Town's orientation process for new employees and volunteers. Town staff and Council received updated Human Rights code, code of conduct and respectful workplace and violence in the workplace training in 2016. Training for volunteers and staff has been provided to explain the updates to Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg 191/11) in 2017.

Staff are training to continue to produce documents in accessible formats for use on the Town's web site as well as other media.

Employment

Town of Aylmer is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. An Accommodation Policy has been developed for the purpose of ensuring the Town of Aylmer provides an inclusive workplace.

The Town notifies the public and staff that, when requested, Town of Aylmer will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired. The Town will work with an applicant to ensure they are included in the recruitment process and will provide accessible formats and communications support when requested.

The Town is committed and has policies in place for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies (temporary or permanent) for employees that have been absent due to a disability.

The Town trains Council and staff on accessibility requirements and responsibilities and strives to develop opportunities to employees with disabilities when available.

The Town consults with the public regarding accessibility barriers and ensures that purchases include structural and technical features to assist people with disabilities where possible.

Transportation

The Town has notified owners and operators of municipal taxicabs that they are prohibited from charging a higher fare for persons with disabilities or for the storage of assistive devices. Taxicab owners and operators have been notified of the requirement that their vehicle registration and identification information must be displayed on the back bumper of vehicles and have the same information available in an accessible format upon request.

Design of Public Spaces

The Town of Aylmer will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes.
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas.
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds.
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals.
- Accessible off street parking.
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and

waiting areas.

Town of Aylmer will put following procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to its accessible parts of its public spaces.

In the event of a service disruption, we will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available on our web site.

Contact Information

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:

Jennifer Reynaert

Phone: (519) 773-3164

Email: jreynaert@town.aylmer.on.ca

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request from:

Jennifer Reynaert, (519) 773-3164