



Election Accessibility Plan

2022 Municipal Election

Municipality of the Township of Laird

Contents

- 1. Introduction 3**
- 2. Objectives..... 3**
- 3. Development of the Plan..... 4**
- 4. Voting Methods 4**
- 5. Entrance and Exit 5**
- 6. Parking..... 5**
- 7. Service Animals 6**
- 8. Candidates 6**

1. Introduction

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2022 Municipal Election in the Township of Laird.

The Township of Laird has made great efforts in promoting a barrier-free community. In an effort to ensure that the 2022 Municipal Election is consistent with the core principles of the *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, this planning document was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported to Council following the election.

FIRST PERSON LANGUAGE NOTE:

For the purpose of this document the staff of The Township of Laird will use person-first language.

2. Objectives

This plan is used to highlight the measures that the Township of Laird will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That a person with disabilities is 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 a person with disabilities is aware that accessibility measures are available via channels such as the newsletters, media launches, and the Township of Laird website www.lairdtownship.ca (in accordance with the AODA web accessibility standards (CAG 2.0 AA)).

- That the polling station location is accessible and barrier-free.

3. Development of the Plan

This Plan is a “living” document which is 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 requirements were met and a feasible plan was in place during the development of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan. The following steps shall be implemented:

- 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.

4. Voting Methods

- Voting will take place at the Laird Township Hall at 3 Pumpkin Point Road West in person. (Polling Station)
- In-person Voting with Paper Ballots
- Laird Township will be using a paper ballot where electors choose their preferred candidate(s) by placing a mark, with a pen or pencil in the circle next to the name of the chosen candidate(s).
- An elector with a disability may choose to have a person assist them behind the voting privacy screen. If an elector does not have a support system, trained Election Officials will be present at the voting poll to assist. Magnifying sheets will be provided behind each privacy voting screen for use by electors, in reading the ballot.

- The voting areas at each location will be set up taking into consideration the table heights and to ensure proper spacing between each area, allowing for wider aisle widths for use of a wheelchair or any other mobility device. Having assistance of a support person.
- Each voting Place will be equipped with a pad of paper and pen to communicate with electors with hearing impairments, if required.
- By proxy is done through paper and must be brought to the clerk to sign.

5. Entrance and Exit

The route to the entrance of the Polling Station 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 Polling Station and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open for the duration of the Polling Station hours. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

6. Parking

Accessible parking shall be available at the Polling Station. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and will be firm on level ground, close to the entrance of the Polling Station.

7. Service Animals

Individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Polling Station.

8. 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 has released several quick reference documents to assist candidates with accessible elections.