

Municipality of Lakeshore
Municipal Election
Accessibility Plan

2026



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Introduction

The main objective of the Plan is to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities to ensure that elections are accessible to all voters and candidates.

This plan will address specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2026 Clerk's Election Procedures in the Municipality of Lakeshore.

To ensure that the 2026 Municipal Election is consistent with the principles of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005**, this planning document was developed in advance of the election to identify measures to be taken and reported following the election.

The following excerpts from the **Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996**, Sched. 32, define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities:

Number and location of voting places

45 (1) The clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (1).

Accessibility

(2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (23).

Plan re: barriers

12.1 (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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Report

(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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Variations for electors with visual impairments

41 (3) 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). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1)

Interpretation

- a) References to items in the plural include the singular, as applicable. “Their” may refer to both the singular and the plural and includes references to a Person or thing that is feminine, masculine, or non-binary.
- b) The words "include", "including" and "includes" are not to be read as limiting the phrases or descriptions that precede them. Any examples provided are intended to be representative examples and not intended to be an exhaustive list.
- c) Headings are inserted for ease of reference only and are not to be used as interpretation aids.
- d) Specific references to laws or by-laws are meant to refer to the current laws applicable at the time that this by-law was enacted and shall be interpreted to include amendments, restatements, and successor legislation.

Development of the Plan

This Plan is an active document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

The Lakeshore Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted in the development of this Plan.

Within ninety days of the Election, a report will be prepared on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Objectives

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

- e) That all voting locations are physically accessible;
- f) That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection during the election;
- g) That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- h) That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate or; and
- i) 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 Municipality’s website Lakeshore.ca/Election and Social Media Facebook; Facebook.com/MunicipalityofLakeshore/ or Instagram; Instagram.com/LakeshoreON

Part #1 - Identification of Barriers

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the removal of a “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice; (“obstacle”)

Physical Barriers – The Municipality has created a checklist for election staff to use when conducting site visits of each voting location ensuring each facility has:

- j) Barrier-free path of travel from the parking lot and sidewalk
- k) Barrier-free parking, where parking is provided
- l) Door operators or accessible doors
- m) Adequate lighting.

Communication Barriers – The Municipality is providing informative and accessible content on election webpages by:

- n) Ensuring election information is available online which is written in clear and simple language
- o) Continuously updating election information on the election webpages to reflect the most recent developments and information
- p) Providing a how to vote section in the Clerk’s Election Procedures that includes accessibility information about voting locations.

Candidate Information – The Municipality of Lakeshore is providing information to support accessible campaigning by:

- q) Providing candidates with resources such as the [Candidates’ Guide to Accessible Elections](#) produced by The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)
- r) Making the voters’ list available in electronic, accessible format, free of charge to all candidates upon request.

Part #2 - Accessibility for Voters

Voting Methods

The Municipality of Lakeshore voting method for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Trustee Election will be conducted by in-person voting with optical scan tabulators.

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).

An elector with a disability can also choose to have a person assist them behind the voting screen.

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 Procedure.

Voting Place

For the purpose of this plan, the Voting Place includes the exterior parking and walkways near the location.

To ensure that each Voting Place is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Place Accessibility Audit Checklist will be completed prior to confirming the site as a Voting Place.

A comprehensive accessibility audit of each Voting Place will be conducted to ensure that each Voting Place is accessible to electors with disabilities. The location accessibility audit checklist is included as Appendix "A" to this document.

Reference form – Accessibility Audit Check List

Each Voting Location shall at a minimum include the following:

Accessible Route

An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the Voting Place and into the voting area within the location. The Voting Place will be identified with clear and understandable signage.

Parking

Designated parking for electors with disabilities is to be provided near the entrance of the Voting Place where possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility. An increase in the usual parking limits for people with disabilities will be requested where possible and will be located on firm and level ground. Election Officials will be reminded to make routine checks to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

Entrance/Exit to the Voting Place

All entrances to the Voting Place will be easy to access and barrier free. Every effort will be made to ensure that the door into the interior Voting Place is wide enough for a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to pass through safely and easily. Should doors into the interior Voting Place not be accessible, the doors shall be monitored by Election Officials for the duration of the Voting Place hours. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the day. In the event of a fire safety alarm, the Supervisor Deputy Returning Officer or Election Official will ensure the main door is closed upon exiting the building.

Interior Voting Place

Access to the interior Voting Place will be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting places are to be well lit, and seating will be made available.

Assistive Person Equipment

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including but not limited to wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

Accessible Tabulators

Accessible Tabulators will be available at the Comber Community Centre and the Atlas Tube Recreation Centre for advance voting and on Election Day. Accessible Tabulators allow for independent voting using audible assistance or sip-and-puff technology.

Election Officials will be trained on the use of Accessible Tabulators to provide the necessary assistance to voters in a safe and secure manner.

Service Animals

An animal is a Service Animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to their disability, for example, a guide dog wearing a harness. Service Animals will be permitted in Voting Places.

Assistive Aids

Each Voting Place will be equipped with magnifying sheets to assist an individual with low vision.

Each Voting Place will be equipped with a pad of paper and pen to communicate with the hearing impaired if required.

Support Persons

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, an Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Election Official shall, in conjunction with the elector with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may actually be marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. The Election Official will have the assistor take the prescribed oath EL27 - Oral Oath of Friend.

[Reference form – Oral Oath of Friend or Interpreter](#)

Published Election Information

Signage Checklist -

Large Print – printed material generated by the Municipality will be provided in an accessible font, minimum 12 point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 18 points. Note: ballots cannot be printed in large print, however magnifying sheets are available at each Voting Place.

Website – information generated by the Municipality on the website regarding the election will be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA and allow for assistive software to be utilized. In addition, the website font can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information.

Part #3 - Accessibility for Candidates

Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Places and other designated election locations.

Campaign Expenses

Expenses directly related to an individual's disability which would not have been incurred if not for the election, are not subject to the spending limit if they are incurred by a candidate or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability.

Accessible 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. A voter or candidate may request election information in an alternate format. The Municipality will provide an electronic copy which can be used by the requester to produce an alternate format which best suits their needs for their disability.

In the event the information is not generated by the Municipality or is supplied by a third party, the Municipality will make reasonable efforts to obtain the information from the third party in an accessible format and/or will attempt to assist the elector by providing contact information to the support group specific to their disability.

Part #4 - Training

The Municipality is providing accessible customer service by:

Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs. All staff is required to complete elections and accessibility training. Training will include:

- s) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
- t) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- u) How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services.
- v) What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

Staff training standards and practices directly related to the Election will be established to ensure that people with disabilities are able to vote in a positive customer service environment and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that in every way possible a voters' needs are to be accommodated whenever possible.

Assistance

Elections staff are available to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election and can be reached by way of the contact information provided below:

- w) Telephone: 519-728-2700
- x) In Person: Town Hall, 419 Notre Dame Street, Belle River Ontario
- y) Email:
- z) Mail: Municipality of Lakeshore
Attention: Election Coordinator
419 Notre Dame Street, Belle River Ontario

Part # 5 - Service Disruptions

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 will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of Voting Places during the advance vote or on the final voting day, Notices of Disruption will be posted in real time:

aa) on the Municipality's website and election website Lakeshore.ca/Election ;

bb) on Facebook; Facebook.com/MunicipalityofLakeshore

cc) Posted at the site of disruption; and

dd) where applicable, a media advisory will be issued

Part #6: Voting Place Institutions

The **Municipal Elections Act, 1996** requires that on voting day, a Voting Place shall be provided on the premises of the following:

Voting Places in institutions, retirement homes

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. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (7); 2016, c. 15, s. 34 (2, 3)

Attendance on electors with disabilities

(9) To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a Deputy Returning Officer shall attend on the elector anywhere within the area designated as the Voting Place. 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (3).

For the 2026 Municipal Election, the following institution locations have been identified:

ee) Seasons Lakeshore – 1700 Essex County Rd 22, Belle River

ff) La Chaumiere – 1023 County Rd. 22 RR#1 Lakeshore

gg) St. Joachim Manor – 2718 County Rd. 42, Lakeshore, ON

hh) Lakeshore Residence - 1628 Essex County Rd 22, Belle River, ON

Part #7 – Proxy Voting

An eligible elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a Voting Place may appoint another eligible elector to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on their behalf.

The appointment must be made on the prescribed form Appointment for Voting Proxy – Form 3 available at the Municipality of Lakeshore Town Hall. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to make an oath or solemn declaration before a Commissioner of Oath.

In Accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996

- 44 (2) a person shall not,
ii) appoint more than one voting proxy;
jj) act as a voting proxy for more than one other person, 1996, c.32 Sched., s.44 (2)

44 (3) Appointment – restrictions – exemption

The restriction in clause (2) (b) does not apply if the proxy and the other person are spouses or siblings of each other, parent and child, or grandparent and grandchild, 1996, c. 32, Sch., s. 44 (3); 1999

Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance Voting Place or on the final voting day at the Elector’s designated Voting Place. On the final voting day, the proxy must be exercised at a Voting Place on behalf of the person who is unable to attend. The appointment of a proxy may only be made after 2:00 PM on Nomination Day, August 21, 2026 and is null and void after the final voting day.

Reference form – [Appointment for Voting Proxy – Form 3](#)

Part #8 - Feedback

The Municipality 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.

Feedback can be provided by any one of the following methods Post Election:

- kk) Online Survey: [Lakeshore.c/Election](https://lakeshore.c/election)
- ll) In Person or Mail:
Municipality of Lakeshore
419 Notre Dame St.
Belle River, Ontario
N8L 0P8
- mm) E-mail: Elections@Lakeshore.ca

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences where possible, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election information and service.

Schedule A – Oral Oath of Friend or Interpreter

Municipal Elections Act, 1996

Oral Oath of Friend of Elector

I, (name of friend), a friend of (name of elector), an elector who is unable to vote without assistance, and is entitled to vote in this municipality declare that I will:

- Mark the ballot as directed by the elector; and
- Keep secret the manner in which this elector voted.

Oral Oath of Interpreter

I, (name of interpreter) acting as interpreter for (name of elector), and elector entitled to vote in this municipality, declare that I will faithfully translate the necessary oaths as well as any lawful questions necessarily put to the elector and their answers at this voting place.

Schedule B – Appointment for Voting Proxy

The Appointment for Voting Proxy - Form 3 is provided by the Province of Ontario. Please download, print, and fill the form. The form can be accessed online through the [Province of Ontario Central Forms Repository](#) or directly at [Appointment for Voting Proxy - Form 3](#).

Schedule C – Voting Location Accessibility Checklist Template

This template provides a list of questions for each voting location. Those who assess the voting location will note each question with a yes or no answer and include any additional comments related to the question.

Voting Location:

- nn) Address:
- oo) Facility Type:
- pp) Date of Review:
- qq) Phone Number:

Poll Information

- rr) No. of Polls:
- ss) Eligible Voters:
- tt) Tables Available:
- uu) Chairs Available:

Exterior Access:

Is there Exterior Signage?

- vv) Is the identifier clearly visible from the street and sidewalk?

Is there accessible parking?

- ww) What is the total number of parking spaces on site?
- xx) What is the total number of accessible parking spaces on site?
- yy) Are the accessible parking spaces at least 2400 mm (95:) in width?
- zz) Are the accessible parking spaces located on a firm, level surface?
- aaa) Are the accessible parking spaces designated by a vertical sign?
- bbb) Are the accessible parking spaces designated by markings on the pavement?
- ccc) Is the parking area well lit?

Is there an unobstructed path from parking to main entrance?

- ddd) Is the maximum running slope of the walkway not steeper than 1:20?
- eee) Are curb cuts provided to the barrier-free path of travel?
- fff) Is the approach to the voting area easy to travel (no broken pavement or potholes)?
- ggg) Is there a ramp located in the barrier-free path of travel?
- hhh) Does the ramp have a maximum slope of 1:12 or less?

- iii) Is the width of the ramp between handrails 910 mm (36") or greater?
- jjj) If the ramp is longer than 9 m (29.5") is there a landing with minimum dimensions of 1500 mm x 1500 mm (5'x5')
- kkk) Are all landings, including the top and bottom 1500 mm x 1500 mm (5' x 5')?
- lll) Is the path well lit?

Interior Access

Is there an accessible entrance into the building?

- mmm) Is the entrance well lit?
- nnn) Is the threshold at the entrance 13mm (1/2") or less?
- ooo) Is the width of the door opening a minimum of 810 mm (32")?
- ppp) Does the main accessible entrance have an automatic door opener?
- qqq) Is the entrance clearly marked with signage?

Are interior corridors and doorways accessible?

- rrr) Is the elevator clearly visible or is there adequate signage?
- sss) Is the area free of obstacles? (no uneven surfaces, tripping hazards)
- ttt) Is the width of the door opening a minimum of 810 mm (32")?
- uuu) Is there level access from the entrance of the voting location to the voting area?
- vvv) Is the flooring non-slip, even and level?

Voting Location

- www) Is the voting location well lit?
- xxx) Are there seats available for people to rest if needed?
- yyy) Is there enough space inside the voting area for a wheelchair to move easily?

Does the building have an accessible washroom for staff?

- zzz) Is the washroom clearly identified by signage?

Additional Notes: