



Municipality of West Elgin

Election Accessibility

Report

2018 Municipal Elections

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1. Introduction

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the appropriate legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal elections in West Elgin.

The Municipal Elections Act, (MEA), Section 12.1 (1) places responsibility on the Clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities. Accessible Customer Service Standards must be followed when conducting municipal elections.

Section 12.1 (2) of the MEA requires that 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.

The West Elgin municipal elections were conducted in a manner that ensured that Candidates and electors with disabilities had full and equal access to all election information and services, including the voting kiosk at the municipal office. The election was conducted in a manner that ensured that persons with disabilities were able to vote independently and privately with access to voting assistance if required.

Section 12.1 (2) of the MEA requires that within ninety (90) days of voting day the Clerk who is responsible for conducting the election shall submit a report to Council regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect elector and candidates with disabilities.

2. Staff Training and Election Assistance

Staff Training

All staff with election duties completed specific Election Training to comply with the municipal Accessibility Plan and to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities were served in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Training included:

- How to interact/communicate with persons with various types of disability;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, require the assistance of a support person or a service animal.
- How to clearly explain internet and telephone voting, as well as the touch-screen voting kiosk option.
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.
- How to provide voter assistance if requested.

Provision of Election Information

Election information was able to be provided to electors and candidates with disabilities in an alternative format.

Notice of the provision of information in an alternative format was provided on the municipal website, www.westelgin.net, and included in the election notices in the local media. No requests for an alternate format were received.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

Public notice was to be posted on the municipal website and in the local media if there was a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services. There were no disruptions to the delivery of election information or services.

Staff Assistance

The Clerk's Department Staff were available throughout the election to assist with any issues that arose with respect to providing a barrier-free election. The following contact information was shared on the municipal website, at the municipal office and in the local newspaper:

Telephone:	519-785-0560
Email:	vote@westelgin.net
Fax:	519-785-0644
In Person:	Clerk's Office 22413 Hoskins Line Rodney, ON
Mail:	Clerk's Department, Municipality of West Elgin 22413 Hoskins Line P.O. Box 490, Rodney, ON N0L 2C0

3. Assistance to Electors

General

The 2018 West Elgin Municipal Elections were conducted with Internet and Telephone Voting methods, as well as with traditional ballots on voting day. Detailed information about each voting method was set out in the 2018 Election Procedures Manual, available on the municipal website or from the Clerk's Office and available in an alternative format upon request.

The Clerk's Department staff members were available throughout the election to assist with any issues that arose with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Accessible Voting Kiosk

Section 45(2) of the MEA requires that the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

An accessible voting kiosk located at the municipal office, 22413 Hoskins Line, Rodney was available to voters from October 11, 2018 to October 19, 2018 during regular office hours. Voting kiosks were located at both the Rodney Recreation Centre and the West Lorne Community Complex in the polling stations on voting day (October 22, 2018) from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Parking

The municipal office parking lot had clearly posted designated parking located close to the entrance to the Voting Kiosk for individuals with disabilities.

The Rodney Recreation Centre parking lot had two (2) clearly marked accessible parking spaces, close to the entrance to the Voting Kiosk.

The West Lorne Community Complex had two (2) temporary accessible parking spots located on either side of the accessible curb on Graham Street.

Entrance

The entrance to the municipal office Voting Kiosk had no steps with a level surface leading to the entrance door. Doors to the municipal office had automatic door opening devices or were propped open in a safe manner.

The entrance to the Rodney Recreation Centre has some steps along with an accessible ramp leading to the entrance door. Doors to the Recreation Centre had automatic door opening devices or were propped open in a safe manner.

The entrance to the West Lorne Community Complex had some steps, along with an accessible ramp leading to the entrance door. Doors to the Complex had automatic door opening devices or were propped open in a safe manner.

All of the above noted entrances are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility devices.

Interior

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth was level. Carpeting and doormats were level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area was well lit and seating was made available in all locations

Accessible Voting Booth

The Voting Kiosk was low in height and had sufficient area to allow individuals using mobility aids to vote independently and secretively.

Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities could be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Kiosk or the Voting Kiosk Staff were available to assist the voter in casting their vote.

A voting location was established for reduced hours at Beattie Manor Retirement Residence to increase accessibility to residents.

Accessible Voting Technologies

Voting Kiosks had a touch screen computer for internet voting that assisted voters with disabilities in casting their votes with independence and privacy. Staff was available at all times to assist voters at the kiosk upon request. Support persons and service animals were accommodated.

Elgin County libraries in West Elgin also provided internet access during regular library hours and had staff available to assist voters in accessing the electronic voting site throughout the voting period for voters that choose to vote from that location. This provided voters another option of location to access the internet.

4. Internet Voting

Internet voting allowed voters to vote from their home, or anywhere in North America, through secured internet services. This method provided for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy as voters had the option of using the assistive tools they have on their own computer such as a thumbswitch or sip and puff technology.

This method of voting was designed to encourage voter participation as voters did not have to attend a physical location to cast their ballot and accessibility and privacy for persons with disabilities is maximized.

5. Telephone Voting

Telephone voting allowed voters to vote from their home through secured telephone services which provided for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy. Land lines or cell phone were used to vote, the method is compatible with assistive devices.

Voters could register their vote selections with the telephone keypad or voice commands, greatly increasing accessibility, privacy and independence for voters who do not have internet access.

6. Assistance to Candidates

General

The 2018 West Elgin Municipal Elections was conducted with Internet and Telephone Voting methods, as well as with traditional paper ballots on voting day. Detailed information about each voting method was out in the 2018 Election Procedures Manual, available on the municipal website or from the Clerk's Office and made available in an alternative format upon request.

The Clerk Department Staff were available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Accessibility measures for Candidates to consider in regards to their campaign messaging were included in the Candidate Package.

Service Animals/Support Persons

Candidates were permitted to be accompanied by a service animal and/or support person at all designated elections locations. No service animals or support persons were required by any candidate.

Campaign Expenses

Expenses incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, were excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

7. Feedback Process

The Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form was available on the municipal website, www.westelgin.net and at the municipal office and would be provided in an alternative format upon request.

No feedback was received to be reviewed by the Clerk to remove barriers or provide accommodation if necessary or to improve accessibility measures in future municipal elections.

8. Additional Information

The following additional information was provided to electors and candidates in the Elections Accessibility Plan, on the municipal website:

Elgin County Accessibility Plan – <http://www.elgincounty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2015-2020-Elgin-County-Multi-Year-Accessibility-Plan.pdf>

Municipality of West Elgin Website Election Page – <http://www.westelgin.net/council/2018-municipal-elections>

Electronic Accessible Customer Service Feedback form: <http://www.westelgin.net/council/2018-municipal-elections>