

TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN

Municipal By-election 2024

Accessibility Plan

August 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

Section 12.1(1) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* states that the Clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, specifically Section 12.1(2), the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and implement appropriate measures, within budgetary limits, to provide persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in Municipal Elections. Accordingly, the 2024 Municipal By-election will be conducted in such a manner to ensure that:

1. Candidates and electors with disabilities have reasonable access to all election information and services.
2. Persons with disabilities have full access to Voting Places.
3. Persons with disabilities have access to alternative methods of voting assistance that will permit them to vote independently. In the event, their disability cannot be accommodated through such alternative methods as are provided, a person with disabilities will have access to assistance from an Election Official who has received accessible customer service training.
4. Feedback regarding the conduct of the 2024 Municipal By-election from persons with disabilities will be collected and documented so for use in the administration of future municipal elections.

In accordance with Subsection 12.1(3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, within 90 days following the election, the Clerk will submit a report to Council concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

2. STAFF TRAINING AND ELECTION ASSISTANCE

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.

Provision of Election Information

All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that candidates and electors with disabilities are able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that takes into account their disability. The format may be agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk. In addition, candidates with disabilities may access the election information available on the Township's Website using personal assistive technology such as screen readers. The ability to increase the font size of election documents is available on the Township's Website (www.westlincoln.ca).

Notice of Temporary Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, the Office of the Clerk shall provide public notice on the Township's Election Website and at the physical site of the disruption. The notice shall include the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration and a description of alternative methods of delivering the information or service, if applicable.

Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

Staff Assistance

Office of the Clerk 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:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. Telephone | 905-957-3346 |
| 2. In Person | Township of West Lincoln - Office of the Clerk,
318 Canborough Street
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0 |
| 3. Fax | 905-957-3219 |
| 4. TTY | 905-957-0680 |
| 5. Email | jpayscale@westlincoln.ca |
| 6. Mail | Township of West Lincoln - Office of the Clerk,
318 Canborough Street, P.O. Box 400
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0 |

3. ASSISTANCE TO 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 that are 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, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

4. ASSISTANCE TO ELECTORS

Voting by Proxy

A person with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to a Voting Place may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form which is available in the Office of the Clerk. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Staff in the Office of the Clerk can administer this oath (Office of the

Clerk, 318 Canborough Street, West Lincoln, ON L0R 2A0). Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on Voting Day. On Voting Day the proxy must be exercised at the poll of the person for whom the proxy is voting. A voting proxy can be appointed at the Township of West Lincoln during regular working hours from Tuesday, September 24, 2024 to and including Monday, November 4, 2024.

Voting Locations

An accessibility checklist for election staff to use when conducting site visits for each voting place has been created to ensure each facility has:

- Barrier free path of travel from parking lot/sidewalk
- Barrier free parking, where provided
- Door operators or accessible doors
- Adequate lighting

Each voting location is inspected prior to the election. The JAAC Coordinator is invited to attend the inspections and provide feedback on items that would need to be addressed.

All voting locations are accessible. Information relating to all advance voting and voting day locations will be available through the Township's Election Website at <https://www.westlincoln.ca/en/township-office/ward3-by-election.aspx>.

Parking

Designated or reserved parking for people with disabilities is to be provided close to the entrance of the Voting Place where possible. Accessible parking spaces will be clearly posted and easy to see from the road and marked.

Service Animals

Electors requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

Entrance to the Voting Place

Where the Voting Place has steps leading to the entrance, ramps will be provided to assist people using mobility aids or who have mobility impairments. Where the main entrance to the voting place is inaccessible, another entry point that is accessible will be used.

The entrance for persons with disabilities will be clearly posted. Every effort shall be made to ensure the door to the Voting Place is wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through easily; that door hardware is accessible and can be operated by a person using a closed fist or alternatively, will be propped open in a safe manner or manned.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior voting area and voting booth shall be level and easily

traversed. All voting areas will be lit and seating made available.

Accessible Voting Booths

At least one accessible voting booth will be available at each Voting Place. Such voting booth will be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretly. A large print Notice of Ballot shall be displayed in close proximity to the voting booth. Magnifying sheets will be made available to assist any individual with low vision.

Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, the Poll Clerk or another Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Deputy Returning Officer shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which the assistance can be provided. This may include actually marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. All persons assisting a voter with a disability will be required to swear an oath.

A Deputy Returning Officer is authorized to attend any place within a voting location to serve a voter including on-street adjoining the voting location.

Supplies will be provided at all voting locations in order to assist electors with disabilities:

- Magnifying sheets to assist electors with low vision
- Accessible ballot template to assist electors who are visually impaired
- Note pads and pens to assist electors who are deaf or hard of hearing

Internet Voting

At least one accessible internet voting medium will be available at each advanced voting location. This can include but is not limited to, a secure tablet, computer, laptop, or other devices. In addition, the Poll Clerk or another Election Official in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting location, the Deputy Returning Officer shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which the assistance can be provided. This may include actually marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. All persons assisting a voter with a disability will be required to swear an oath.

5. FEEDBACK PROCESS

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to persons with disabilities may be submitted to the Office of the Clerk through a variety of methods including:

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Telephone | 905-957-3346 |
| 2. In Person or
By mail | Township of West Lincoln
318 Canborough Street
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0 |
| 3. Fax | 905-957-3219 |
| 4. Email | jpayscale@westlincoln.ca |

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 alternative methods of providing election services. Feedback can be provided to the Clerk using any of the above noted methods. Feedback from our electors gives us the opportunity to learn and improve.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Township of West Lincoln – Office of the Clerk

The Office of the Clerk is located at the Township of West Lincoln, 318 Canborough Street, Smithville, ON, L0R 2A0.

Election staff will do their best to answer any questions you may have about running for office, the election in general or provisions for persons with disabilities.

Township of West Lincoln – Election Website

The Township of West Lincoln's Election Website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the website for an up-to-date list of candidates and other important messages or events throughout the election year at <https://www.westlincoln.ca/en/township-office/ward3-by-election.aspx>.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election Website

This website contains information about municipal elections including the Province of Ontario's 2024 Municipal By-election Candidates Guide, the 2024 Voters' Guide and the 2024 Guide for Third Party Advertisers at the following link: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/municipal-elections>.

Service Ontario – e-Laws

This website contains all current statutes including the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, www.e-laws.gov.on.ca