

The City of
Woodstock
2018
Municipal
and School
Board
Election



2018

**Accessibility Plan
(Pre-Election)**

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2018 Municipal and School Board Election Accessibility Plan

Background

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the clerk must have regard for the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The plan must be made available to the public before voting day. Within 90 days after the election, the clerk must also prepare a public report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affected electors and candidates with disabilities.

Legislation

Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act* states that:

“(1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

“(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.

“(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.”

Section 45(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act* states that:

“In establishing locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.”

Polling Locations

Advance polls will be held at the following locations:

- City Hall, 500 Dundas Street
 - Saturday, October 6, 2018; 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - Tuesday to Friday, October 9 to October 12, 2018; 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - Monday to Friday, October 15 to October 19, 2018; 12:00 p.m to 8:00 p.m

Election Day Polls will be held on October 22, 2018 from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. at the following locations:

- Goff Hall, 381 Finkle Street
- Unifor Hall, 126 Beale Street
- The Rock Community Church, 1140 Nellis Street
- Oxford Auditorium, 875 Nellis Street

Goff Hall, Unifor Hall, and the Rock Community Church were also used as Election Day polls in 2014 and the feedback regarding accessibility was positive. Cowan Park has been replaced with the Oxford Auditorium as the turnout at Cowan Park was quite low in 2014, likely due to the geographic location.

Roving Polls will be conducted at all required nursing homes, retirement homes, and hospitals as per the *Municipal Elections Act*.

The Municipal Elections Act was changed in 2016 so that landlords and condominium corporations are no longer allowed to prohibit tenants or owners from displaying election signs on their premise. This includes the ability to display election signs in common areas of the building even if the space is being used as a voting place. As a result, the City of Woodstock will no longer be using apartment buildings as voting places in order to ensure the neutrality of the voting place. Instead, an additional week of advanced voting from 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. has been added at City Hall and a poll will now be held on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend. This advanced voting will be accessible to all members of the public rather than just the tenants of the apartment buildings.

Additional election information can be found at the City of Woodstock website: <https://www.cityofwoodstock.ca/en/city-governance/municipal-election.aspx>

Removing and Preventing Barriers

The City of Woodstock is committed to taking measures to identify and remove accessibility barriers that may exist through the voting process and at polling locations. The following measures are being taken to remove and prevent barriers during the 2018 Municipal and School Board Election:

- The new voting location at Oxford Auditorium was deemed fully accessible by the City's summer accessibility student in 2017, who utilizes both a power wheelchair and a service animal. This location is fully accessible to any citizen with a mobility impairment or device.

- An election location Accessibility Checklist (Appendix A) has been created and completed for each location in order for election staff to review the polling location and ensure that any barriers are identified and removed.
- Chairs will be placed in the hallways of voting locations so individuals will be able to sit, in the event that there are line-ups at the respective voting location.
- Any polling location that does not have automatic power-assist doors, will have doors propped open so any individual using a mobility aid can freely access the voting space.
- Service animals are permitted at all polling locations.
- None of the Election Day polls listed above have stairs at the location entrance and all have wide doors, thus ensuring persons using mobility devices will have access to the location.
- Voters will be able to cast their ballots at any of the four voting locations on voting day. This 'vote anywhere' method will assist all voters by providing the opportunity to vote at the most convenient location.
- When casting ballots, electors may have election staff or a support person(s) assist with reading the ballot aloud and/or marking the ballot.
- To allow an elector with a disability to vote, election staff will attend to the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place.
- Goff Hall will be configured with an accessible voting terminal that is used by voters who require assistance to mark their ballot. The accessible voting terminal provides accessibility to those voters who are unable to negotiate a paper ballot and manual marking device such as a pen. A standard ballot will be issued to the voter and inserted into the voting terminal. The terminal will display the ballot choices and instructions in large text print on a touch screen monitor, and the information is read by a synthesized speech audio system. Voters have the ability to make their selection by touching the buttons on the screen or by pressing the keys on the Braille keypad. The accessible voting terminal will confirm votes selected for voter verification and generate a marked paper ballot with a mark that is indistinguishable from a ballot marked by hand to ensure voter secrecy. The voter will then proceed to the Vote Tabulator Operator who will feed the ballot into the tabulator as per standard procedure.
- Election staff will also be visiting Woodingford Lodge, Park Place, Oxford Gardens, Caressant Care, Langdon Retirement, Cedarview Retirement, and Woodstock Hospital on Election Day. Residents of these facilities will have the opportunity to cast their ballots in an accessible space without leaving their residence.
- As noted above, advanced roving polls will no longer be held at apartment buildings. However, the addition of 5 days of advanced voting as well as a poll on Thanksgiving weekend will provide all voters with additional options for casting a ballot.
- All voting locations are located along a transit route.

- Transit and Para-Transit will be running at all times when the polls are open.
- Accessible formats and communication supports for all election material will be made available upon request.

Feedback

Feedback, comments, and suggestions regarding the accessibility of elections is encouraged and invited. Please contact the City Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

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Appendix A

Barrier-Free Accessibility Checklist: Voting Locations



Voting Location: _____

1. Parking

- a. Number of accessible parking spaces on site: _____
- b. Location in respect to the entrance way/distance to walk: _____
- c. Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility?

Yes	No
-----	----
- d. Is there adequate lighting?

Yes	No
-----	----
- e. Surface:

Paved	Gravel	Concrete
-------	--------	----------

2. Exterior Access

- a. Accessible route from parking to entrance:

Yes	No
-----	----
- b. Are curb cuts provided along the barrier-free path of travel?

Yes	No
-----	----
- c. Ramp landings are wide enough for wheelchairs and scooters and have a firm, level, non-slip finish:

Yes	No
-----	----
- d. Is the building and route signage displayed, in large and high-contrast lettering?

Yes	No
-----	----
- e. Obstacles (please list)
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____

3. Drop off and Loading Zones

- a. Surface:

Paved	Gravel	Concrete
-------	--------	----------
- b. Appropriate for voter drop-off/para-transit:

Yes	No
-----	----
- c. Bus Shelter or stop nearby:

Yes	No
-----	----

4. Entrances and Exterior Doors

- a. Barrier-free path of travel to entrance:

Yes	No
-----	----
- b. Adequate lighting leading to entrance:

Yes	No
-----	----
- c. Power-Assist door at entrance:

Yes	No
-----	----
- d. If no power-assist, can door be propped open?

Yes	No
-----	----

5. Lobby, Hallways & Corridors

- | | | | |
|----|--|-----|----|
| a. | Are interior doors power-assist? | Yes | No |
| b. | If no power-assist, can door be propped open: | Yes | No |
| c. | Do floor finishes have non-slip surfaces under wet and dry conditions? | | |
| | Yes | No | |
| d. | Overhanging/protruding objects: | Yes | No |
| e. | Obstacles (please list) | | |
| | i. _____ | | |
| | ii. _____ | | |
| f. | Will queue extend to outdoors? | Yes | No |
| g. | If yes, is there shelter available? | Yes | No |

6. Interior Doors

- | | | | |
|----|--|-----|----|
| a. | Interior doors are equipped with power-assist: | Yes | No |
| b. | If no power-assist, can door be propped open? | Yes | No |

7. Fire Exits

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|
| a. | Signage: _____ | | |
| b. | Are fire exits accessible? | Yes | No |
| c. | Are exit instructions printed in large text and mounted in an accessible and highly visible location? | Yes | No |

8. Washrooms

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|
| a. | Proximity to voting room: _____ | | |
| b. | Available to the public: | Yes | No |
| c. | Power assist: | Yes | No |
| d. | Accessible Sink (knee clearance of 685 mm): | Yes | No |
| e. | Style of faucet (automatic or not): _____ | | |
| f. | Grab bar beside the toilet: | Yes | No |